

Iran turns down Red Cross request to free Iraqi POWs

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran on Monday rejected a Red Cross appeal for the release of the remaining Iraqi prisoners of the 1980-88 Gulf war, Tehran television reported. The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, said the request was made by Corrado Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in a letter to Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "I have extended my application to your highest to use your influence to free all Iraqi prisoners who express a desire to return home," the television quoted Mr. Sommaruga as saying. In reply, Mr. Khamenei demanded that Iraq first provide a full list of Iranian prisoners it was still holding. "We, too, would like to see the prisoners of this destructive war return to the arms of their loved ones so that in this way some of the losses of this war are made up," the TV quoted Mr. Khamenei as saying. He said a "significant number" of Iranian prisoners were still in Iraqi detention camps. "We have the responsibility to keep hope alive among the families of these prisoners, whose names Iraq has not even allowed to be published anywhere."

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Hurd, Ayoub confer

LONDON (Petra) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd Monday received Jordan Ambassador to the United Kingdom Foad Ayoub and discussed with him Jordanian-British relations. The two diplomats exchanged views on various regional and international issues. Mr. Hurd voiced his government's appreciation for Jordan's role in the ongoing peace process and expressed his country's support for the process.

Floods kill 13 in Algeria

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — At least 13 people have been killed and hundreds made homeless in four days of heavy rains and flooding throughout northern Algeria, authorities reported Monday. Three people died when a water-weakened wall collapsed in Algiers, where some streets lay under 30 centimetres of water, officials said. Other deaths occurred around the country. Helicopters evacuated 59 people from rooftops in Mafra, west of Algiers, as the floodwaters swallowed their homes, Algerian radio reported. Hundreds of homes elsewhere were uninhabitable.

China praises Muslim republics

ROME (R) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng praised the leadership of the former Soviet Union's Muslim republics on Monday, saying they were politically stable due to their acute awareness of religious problems. An Italian government spokesman quoted Mr. Li as saying China shared Western concern over the control of nuclear weapons in the Commonwealth of Independent States. But Mr. Li appeared far more optimistic than his host, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, about the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism spreading its political influence.

Inspectors tour Iraqi chemical sites

BAGHDAD (R) — A team of U.N. inspectors began touring military sites in Iraq on Monday in preparation for the destruction of Iraqi chemical weapons. Team leader Dieter Job, a German national, said the 19 inspectors would spend about eight days in Iraq and report to the special commission charged with destroying the Iraqi chemical, nuclear and biological arsenal.

France to sign NPT

PARIS (R) — The French government agreed on Monday to sign the 1968 nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). Government spokesman Jack Lang said the cabinet had approved a draft law in line with an ambitious global arms control programme announced last June by President Francois Mitterrand. France has long adhered to the NPT agreement and Monday's agreement amounted to formal recognition of this.

Israeli government defeats no confidence votes

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's minority government survived five parliamentary motions of no confidence Monday. The motions were put down in a single vote 55-49 with five abstentions, a Knesset (parliament) spokesman said. It was the first challenge to Mr. Shamir's fragile coalition since two far right parties quit the government last week over its participation in Middle East peace talks.

Chinese nuclear scientist missing

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese nuclear scientist vanished in the mountains of southwest China three months ago, and authorities have failed to uncover any clues about his disappearance, an official newspaper reported Monday. Hua Tianqiang, a senior engineer at the Shanghai nuclear institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was last seen on Oct. 15 in Sichuan province's Emei mountains, one of China's holy mountains and a popular tourist site, the China daily reported.

Palestinians head for Moscow, demand full representation

By Lamis Andoni and Sana Atiyeh

AMMAN — Palestinian delegates from the occupied territories left Amman for Moscow Monday, saying they would not take part in today's multilateral regional peace talks unless they are joined there by Palestinians from the diaspora and east Jerusalem. "We will not attend" (the Moscow talks) under any other conditions, Palestinian delegate Sa'eb Erekat told reporters in Amman, referring to broader Palestinian participation.

Palestinian sources, however, said that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) may accept that Palestinians from the diaspora and east Jerusalem be included at a later stage when the talks break into subcommittees. Israel has already rejected the inclusion of Palestinians from the diaspora and east Jerusalem at any stage of the peace process. Since the Madrid peace conference last October, Palestinian representation has been confined to representatives from the West Bank excluding Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Until late Sunday night the PLO appeared reluctant to authorise Palestinian participation at the Moscow talks pending a change in the U.S. and Israeli terms for Palestinian representation.

But the leadership decided, according to Palestinian officials, to send a delegation comprising Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied territories, east Jerusalem and the diaspora in a last minute effort to alter the terms of Palestinian representation in Moscow.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said upon arrival at the King Hussein Bridge Monday that the delegation's delay in deciding to attend the Moscow talks was due to dissatisfaction with the terms for Palestinian participation.

"We were dissatisfied with the terms and conditions of participation and we are still dissatisfied with the lack of progress on the bilateral," Dr. Ashrawi said.

But Palestinian sources said the PLO may have to reconsider its position if the co-sponsors of the

The Palestinian leadership had been reluctant to participate in the regional talks due to the problem with the representation and also because they wanted to use their attendance at the multilateral talks as a tool to improve the negotiating position in the bilateral talks.

Syria and Lebanon have already refused to take part in the Moscow conference because of what they describe as lack of progress in the three rounds of bilateral talks with Israel.

Members of the Palestinian delegation — Dr. Ashrawi, Dr. Erekat, Ghassan Al Khatib, Zakaria Al Agha and Zahira Kamal — crossed the King Hussein Bridge on Monday after being instructed by the PLO to head for Moscow for the multilateral talks.

The delegates were whisked from the bridge to the Palestine embassy in Amman and later to the Marka civil airport where a chartered plane flew them to the Russian capital.

Dr. Ashrawi said that the Palestinian representation at the multilateral talks should be "genuine, comprehensive and legitimate" and include Palestinians from east Jerusalem and from the diaspora, in addition to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The multilateral will be discussing issues of regional interests, issues that pertain to the Palestinian people as a whole and issues of permanent status," Dr. Ashrawi said. "So we need Palestinian representation that is genuine, comprehensive and legitimate."

Dr. Erekat also told journalists in front of the Palestine embassy in Amman before the delegation's departure for Moscow that the Palestinians insisted on their formula of representation, stating that they would not participate otherwise.

"We will not attend (the Moscow talks) in any other formula than this one," Dr. Erekat stated. "It is impossible to accept the Madrid formula."

But Palestinian sources said the PLO may have to reconsider its position if the co-sponsors of the

Mideast peace talks — particularly the U.S. — refused a broader Palestinian representation.

Dr. Erekat said that the Palestinian delegation to the regional talks included two personalities from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, two from Jerusalem and two from the diaspora. None of the delegates would reveal the names of participants at the negotiating table.

"Who they are is not important; what is important is that we will not attend without them," Dr. Erekat said, referring to the representatives from Jerusalem and from outside the occupied territories.

Reuters later quoted diplomats in Tunis as naming the delegates, which included the group that left the West Bank Monday with Faisal Hussein as the head of the delegation. Mr. Hussein was reported to have flown to Moscow from London yesterday.

The list also included Sari Nuseibeh of Jerusalem, and Anis Al Kasseb, Yazid Sayegh and Kamel Mansour from the diaspora.

Israel's rejection of any Palestinian participants from outside the West Bank and Gaza was reiterated Monday by its foreign minister David Levy who was quoted as telling Israeli radio from Moscow that the Israeli government "will simply not allow" Palestinian participants from Jerusalem and abroad.

Palestinian insistence on broader representation is expected to face American objections, especially that Washington has already turned down demands to this effect by Palestinian negotiators last week.

The PLO, which does not want to be blamed for obstructing of the peace process, apparently hopes that it will rally Arab and international support for Palestinian demands in Moscow.

A number of PLO executive committee members have also flown to Moscow in the eve of the Mideast regional talks.

The Palestinian delegation was seen off at the airport by Palestinian ambassador Tayeb Abdul Rahim and Russian ambassador Yuri Gradonov.

The King remarked that the peace process can succeed only if it addresses Palestinians living outside the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel rejects including the diaspora Palestinians in the peace talks.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation threatened to order Palestinian negotiators, who Monday left for Moscow, to boycott the talks unless a role is created for diaspora Palestinians.

Petra news agency quoted the King as saying that he did not expect the peace process would produce results in a short period of time. "We should struggle courageously for a long period of time," he said.

King Hussein expressed hope that the Arab World would realise that it should march towards democracy and towards the end of dictatorships. "Democracy should be established, human rights should be respected and people should participate in government. The future of the Arab World is dependent on that."

The King admitted that his quest for democracy in the Arab World might be unpopular. He said the world is witnessing the end of dictatorships and the one-party rule. "We also hope for an end to despots," he said. The King added: "The message did not reach some in the Middle East, except maybe the peoples of the region."

Religion, the King said, should not be used as a political instrument because no one can claim "monopoly over truth". He added that Islam is not the property of any small group of people.

In Washington, White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater welcomed Mr. Yeltsin's remarks and said: "We believe him," but added that the United States has not changed its targeting of nuclear weapons on the former Soviet Union.

"We cannot... ignore the fact that the size of the arsenal in the former Soviet Union has not yet changed substantially and the targeting for those weapons cannot be independently verified," he said.

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King hopes Syria, Lebanon would attend multilaterals

PARIS (AP) — His Majesty King Hussein expressed hope that Syria and Lebanon change direction and participate in the latest round of Middle East peace talks opening today in Moscow.

King Hussein, in an interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro, said that Jordan had tried to convince Damascus to join the talks on regional issues like water use.

"We've tried. Without success, it's true," the King was quoted as saying. "Syria is a very important actor on the regional scene. We hope, once more, it will change its position."

Syria has refused to participate in discussions on regional cooperation until the Jewish state agrees to hand over the Golan Heights, occupied in the 1967 Mideast war.

"It's worth the trouble to go to Moscow. I'd like that Jordan was represented independently," King Hussein was quoted as saying by the French daily.

"I think, in effect, that these multilateral negotiations will constitute an event more important even than the international peace conference on the Middle East," that the Arabs sought in the past, the King said.

The King remarked that the peace process can succeed only if it addresses Palestinians living outside the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel rejects including the diaspora Palestinians in the peace talks.

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Diplomats gather in Moscow for Mideast talks

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Officials from more than 20 countries poured into Moscow on Monday for a conference that for the first time brings together Israel and a broad cross-section of the Arab World to explore issues of Middle East peace.

The two-day meeting, dealing with water-sharing, disarmament and economic cooperation, is the latest phase of the U.S.-brokered Arab-Israeli peace plan that emerged in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

A key hurdle was overcome Monday morning when the Palestinians dropped their objections and decided to join the talks, the Russian foreign ministry announced.

The so-called multilateral talks are separate from the negotiations Israel has been conducting in Washington with its immediate Arab neighbours. Tuesday's session will be ceremony and speeches, followed by one day of closed-door committee meetings to decide on technicalities.

"It is negotiations about negotiations. There are no matters of substance being discussed here," said Vladimir Petrovsky, an official on the Russian organising committee.

While the Washington talks are supposed to arrive at peace between the warring parties, the Moscow gathering is meant to begin translating peace treaties into practical benefits.

Israel has said it sees the multilateral talks as a test of Arab willingness to accept the Jewish state as a peaceful neighbour. The presence of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and some North African countries reflects changed perceptions in the Arab World in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Moshe Raviv, deputy general director of the Israeli foreign ministry, told reporters in Moscow that a lasting peace in the Middle East "must be buttressed and cemented by fruitful regional cooperation" and that the process will not be easy.

"We have no illusions," he said. "We know how difficult it is to move things ahead in the Middle East."

Mr. Raviv said the fate of Palestinian refugees was not on the agenda for the Moscow talks and that Israel had been willing to discuss it. The issue was deleted because co-sponsors Russia and the United States "have probably concluded... that this issue needs some more preparatory work," he said.

"It will not be discussed (in Moscow) but it does not mean that at a later stage, with the necessary preparatory work, it won't be discussed and negotiated," Mr. Raviv said.

The Moscow event appears to give a commanding role to Japan and the 12-nation European Community. Participants are hoping they will help bankroll the reconstruction of the Middle East after 43 years of hostilities.

According to a schedule issued by the Israeli foreign ministry,

Japan and the EC, alongside the United States, will head all three committee meetings devoted to non-military matters.

The fourth, headed by the United States and Russia, will discuss arms control — an issue of growing urgency as the Middle East enters the nuclear age. Israel is long presumed to have a nuclear arsenal, and Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Libya and Syria are all thought to have similar ambitions.

Russia's role as host reflects the post-cold war transformation that has ended its decades of hostility to Israel. Another sign of change is China's presence at the talks. China has just established diplomatic relations with Israel.

The talks are taking place in the hall of columns in the House of Unions, better known as the place where dead Soviet leaders lay in state, and Stalinist show trials were conducted in the 1930s.

A Russian official said Monday that of the more than 20 dozen states invited, only Syria and Lebanon have refused outright to participate while Algeria and Yemen had not given a final answer by noon (0900 GMT).

"On the whole, we're satisfied with the broad response," said Alexander Belonogov, deputy head of the Russian delegation.

He said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev sent "special messages" to his Syrian and Lebanese counterparts, appealing to them to come. But Syria and Lebanon felt not enough progress had been made in the separate bilateral talks in Washington to merit broadening the process.

"We are sorry that the delegations of Syria and Lebanon will not arrive in Moscow but we respect the decisions of their governments," said Mr. Belonogov.

Meanwhile, Russian President Boris Yeltsin has left Moscow and will miss the Mideast peace conference set to begin Tuesday, Japanese newspaper reports said Monday.

The Asahi newspaper quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying the Russian leader was suffering from a heart ailment that has reportedly plagued him in recent months. But the Yomiuri newspaper quoted a Russian spokesman as saying the cancellation was for personal reasons and that Mr. Yeltsin's health was fine.

The countries and organisations which have confirmed they plan to attend the opening session are: Russia, the United States, the 12-nation European Community, Japan, China, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Turkey, the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — Canada, three North African states — Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania — the seven-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA), at least five of the 11 members of the new Commonwealth of Independent States, including Ukraine, Be-

lie leadership indicated a split between moderates and hardliners. "There are no differences within the Salvation Front, and if no one has been designated, it is because there is no need, and we are awaiting Mr. Hachani's return," Mr. Kebir said.

"If it is necessary to do so, we will easily choose a new leader," he said. Mr. Kebir's admission that the Salvation Front is ready for dialogue with the government is a significant step towards recognising the new authorities. The party has previously denounced the committee as unconstitutional and a "military junta."

The Salvation Front would demand that the parliamentary elections it was on the verge of winning be held, and that the president of the national people's assembly step into Mr. Benjedid's job until presidential elections can be scheduled, Mr. Kebir said.

Mr. Kebir did not say who was leading the Salvation Front while Mr. Hachani is jailed, and denied that the apparent confusion over

Abu Jaber holds talks with Watanabe

MOSCOW (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber met Monday in Moscow with his Japanese counterpart Michio Watanabe and reviewed with him bilateral relations and issues to be discussed at the multilateral talks. Dr. Abu Jaber briefed Mr. Watanabe on Jordan's role in the peace process and its principled stands which call for reaching an honourable and just settlement on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 which require Israel's withdrawal from all Arab lands it occupied in 1967. Following the meeting Dr. Abu Jaber said the meeting dwelt on bilateral relations and the prospect of Japanese support to the Jordanian economy. He said the Japanese minister has expressed understanding for the economic situation in Jordan and promised that his country would study the issue seriously. "We also briefed our Japanese counterparts on the economic and political burdens Jordan is shouldering at this historical moment. It is a heavy burden and Jordan has to ask for assistance from friends like Japan," Dr. Abu Jaber said. Dr. Abu Jaber affirmed that the Moscow talks are extremely important as an inseparable part of the process and complements the bilateral negotiations.

larus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Five members of the European Community — Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg — will send their own officials to sit alongside EC experts on Wednesday at working sessions on Middle East arms control, economic development, the environment and water resources.

Tunisia to attend

President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali said Monday Tunisia would take part in multilateral Middle East peace conference opening in Moscow Tuesday.

"We shall make sure that our presence (in Moscow) serves the cause of justice and peace and contributes to defending the Arab point of view," Ben Ali said in a speech to the central committee of the ruling Democratic Constitutional Union.

Official sources have said Tunisia will be represented in Moscow by Foreign Affairs Minister Habib Ben Yahya, who has already left Tunis for the Russian capital.

FIS hints at dialogue with Algerian government

ALGIERS (AP) — Muslim fundamentalists Monday suggested talks with the military-backed government which is cracking down on their movement, their first offer to negotiate an end to Algeria's political turmoil.

"There is no barrier to dialogue with anyone... for the sake of Islam and Algeria," said Rabah Kebir, a member of the Islamic Salvation Front's executive committee, in an interview with the Associated Press. "We have never said we would refuse dialogue," he said.

Mr. Kebir said the five-man high state committee ruling Algeria since the Jan. 11 resignation of President Chadli Benjedid has not asked the fundamentalists to negotiate.

Instead, the military-dominated leadership cancelled parliamentary elections the fundamentalists appeared certain to win and banned them from conducting any political activity at mosques.

Authorities also ordered the arrest of the fundamentalists' acting leader, Abdul Kader Hachani, on charges of urging soldiers to desert.

Salvation Front sources reached by telephone last week said that Mr. Hachani, 36, a moderate, had been replaced by Othmane Aissani, a slightly more hard-line member of the front's ruling council.

However, Mr. Kebir said Monday that Mr. Hachani had not been replaced by Mr. Aissani or anyone else. Mr. Aissani was in the same room as Mr. Kebir spoke.

"For us, Mr. Hachani is innocent and will soon be freed, and remains the provisional head of the Islamic Salvation Front," said Mr. Kebir in the lengthy interview.

Mr. Kebir did not say who was leading the Salvation Front while Mr. Hachani is jailed, and denied that the apparent confusion over

Baker: Good progress in eliminating Soviet missiles

MOSCOW (AP) — Secretary of State James Baker said Monday that progress has been made in eliminating Soviet battlefield nuclear weapons and that the United States was willing to send technicians to help dismantle more.

Mr. Baker made the comments as he met Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev shortly after arriving in Moscow for a two-day Middle East conference.

The process of destroying a nuclear arsenal takes time and skill. "You have to collect them, store them, and disable them, then you can go about the business of destroying them," Mr.

Baker said. Said Mr. Kozyrev: "It's a technical problem, but we've begun some already... We will welcome cooperation in this sphere."

Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin told ABC news in an interview broadcast Saturday that Russia would stop targeting U.S. cities with its long-range nuclear missiles.

But he did not address the issue of Russian missiles pointed at U.S. military targets. Asked about that on Monday, Mr. Kozyrev said Russian officials still were discussing how to

Libya would arm 'Arab masses' to resist U.S. attack

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Libya will arm the "Arab masses" to resist if the United States takes military action against it, a top Libyan leader was quoted Monday as saying in Tehran.

Maj. Abdul Salam Jalloud, right-hand man to Col. Muammar Qadhafi, also said a U.N. Security Council resolution demanding the extradition of Libyans wanted for bombing U.S. and French jetliners was unjust, Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency said.

"In the case of a U.S. attack on Libya, Libya will arm Arab masses and Islamic movements to counter the United States and its allies," the official agency quoted Maj. Jalloud as saying.

The agency said he accused the United States of masterminding a conspiracy against Libya but that the plot would be confronted and the battle against it would spread to all Muslim states.

Washington and Paris have been pushing for economic sanctions against Libya, such as forbidding landing rights to its national airline, but so far have refrained from calling openly for military action against the North African state.

The Security Council resolution, passed unanimously Jan. 21, cited the demands for surrender of the suspects and urged the Libyan government to respond to the request.

Maj. Jalloud called the resolution unjust and contrary to the U.N. charter, IRNA reported in a dispatch monitored in Cyprus.

Britain and the United States have charged two Libyans in the 1988 Pan Am bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

France has charged four people, including a brother-in-law of Col. Qadhafi, with the 1989 bombing of a UTA jetliner over Niger that killed 170 people.

U.N. envoy meets Qadhafi

On Sunday, a U.N. envoy left Libya saying he was hopeful of progress in its dispute with the West over the midair bombing of airliners over Scotland and Niger, the Libyan JANA news agency reported.

Argentina halts nuclear shipment to Iran

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina has halted a shipment of nuclear equipment to Iran while it reviews the contract, a local private news agency reported on Sunday.

The Diarios Y Noticias agency said Foreign Affairs Secretary Juan Carlos Olima had stopped the shipment of unspecified equipment to Iran last week because Argentina wanted to review the contract and decide within 40 days whether to go ahead with the deal.

A provincial newspaper reported on Saturday that Argentina had suspended the \$18 million deal under pressure from the United States.

The daily Rio Negro said that last week the U.S. State Department had let Argentine Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella know that it was concerned that Argentina could be helping Iran expand its nuclear programme.

The equipment which was to be shipped to Iran was manufactured by INVAP, a company jointly owned by the Argentine National Atomic Commission and the province of Rio Negro.

Argentina, with Latin America's most advanced atomic programme, helped Iran service the core of a nuclear plant in 1988.

Shamir: Israel reaping fruits of peace talks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Israel was reaping both diplomatic and economic fruits of Middle East peace talks as they helped it to break out of its international isolation.

He also told a convention of Jewish journalists in occupied Jerusalem on Sunday he was confident that progress would be made more easily in the multilateral phase of peace talks due to start in Moscow on Tuesday than in faltering bilateral talks.

"We are approaching the end of Israel's international isolation. On Friday we formally established diplomatic relations with the largest nation on earth — China," he said.

"Now there are prospects of similar moves with India, Angola and other African states. In recent weeks, Russia resumed relations with us and the newly-independent republics are doing the same."

Mr. Shamir said Israel's improved international standing had generated economic as well as political benefits.

He said the countries he named were interested in Israel's scientific, technological, and agricultural developments and added: "This opens unprecedented opportunities for Israel and offers attractive prospects to local and overseas investors."

Mr. Shamir said the multilateral peace talks in Moscow would be a chance to enhance Israel's position further.

But Syria and the Damascus-backed government of Lebanon boycotted the Moscow talks on the grounds that Israel has failed to address what they see as the central issue in the bilateral talks — trading occupied land for peace.

The Palestinians, frustrated by a lack of substantive progress in three rounds of bilateral negotiations with Israel, had considered

staying away from Moscow.

They say Israel must halt Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Mr. Shamir made it clear that this would not happen despite U.S. pressure.

"Israel and the people who represent Israel are not talking about a freeze of settlements. Please forget about it," he said.

Mr. Shamir said it would be easier to reach agreement in the multilateral talks because they would focus on regional issues such as arms control, ecology, water resources and refugees.

"I don't think there will be many differences between the various countries. Therefore I think that we have all reasons to believe that the multilateral talks will succeed..." he said.

The Moscow talks were due to give a role in Middle East peace diplomacy to such giants as China, Japan, India and the 12-nation European Community.

Report: Children tortured in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Helsinki Watch, an independent U.S. human rights group, charged Monday that children aged 12 to 17 were subjected to torture by Turkish police.

It appealed to the Turkish government to put an end to the "appalling practice" and urged the United States to speak out against it, noting that Turkey was the third largest recipient of U.S. aid.

"Turkey has clearly failed to meet international agreements and standards in its treatment of children," the report, obtained by the Associated Press, said.

Turkish officials were not immediately available in their offices for comment. Helsinki Watch representatives planned to present copies of the report to the government Tuesday.

The 77-page report, entitled "Nothing unusual, the torture of

children in Turkey" was prepared by a Helsinki Watch mission which visited Turkey last year. It cited the cases of dozens of children who were tortured.

The report described the kinds of torture used against children as slapping, punching, hitting with truncheons, beating the soles of the feet, suspending by the wrists or arms, applying electric shocks to the sensitive parts of the body and abusing sexually.

Five opposition members killed after reelection of Col. Taya

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP) — Police opened fire at opposition supporters protesting the election victory of military ruler Col. Maouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, an opposition spokesman said. Five people were reported killed.

The government on Sunday imposed a 7 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew in Nouakchott, the capital, and in the port city of Nouadhibou, the nation's economic capital.

Soldiers were on patrol in both cities and had set up roadblocks throughout the capital.

Reporters saw dozens of people stranded at a roadblock north of Nouakchott. They said soldiers took their car and bus keys and said they could not enter the capital because of the curfew.

The government said Col. Taya, who seized power in 1984, received 63 per cent of the votes cast in the first multi-party election for this northwest African nation of 2 million people.

The opposition claimed the voting was rigged and international observers accused all candidates of election fraud. Col. Taya was accused of staging the election to legitimize his rule and attract Western aid.

Human rights organisations contend Mauritania's minority black population has been brutally oppressed by Col. Taya's Arab-dominated government.

Opposition protesters had gathered at United Democratic Forces headquarters in Nouadhibou on Sunday when officers surrounded the building and burst in firing live bullets, said

Taya: A feared leader

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP) — Maouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya is feared for his brutal determination to remain Mauritania's leader and renowned for skillfully playing rivals against each other to ensure his ascendancy.

The high school-educated soldier, who seized power from another military ruler in a bloodless coup in 1984, won this northwest African nation's first multiparty presidential election Friday.

He had long promised to install democracy, but said his plans were delayed by student unrest, an upsurge of protests by a black minority who charge they are oppressed by the dominant Moors, and alleged coup attempts.

Opponents say Col. Taya invented the coup plots as pretexts to eliminate possible rivals. They say he purged the army of strong officers, leaving it with ineffective commanders unlikely to challenge him.

Hundreds of other people have been hanged without trial or tortured to death, opposition leaders and international human rights groups charge.

Col. Taya was born in 1941 into the influential Smassid tribe of fair-skinned Moors in the northern city of Atar.

He joined the army after high school and rose through the ranks. In 1974, he went to Paris for two years of study at a military staff college, returning to become army chief of staff.

When the army ousted the civilian government in 1978, Col. Taya was named defence minister. In 1981, following an attempted coup in which Morocco was implicated, the ruling military council made him prime minister. Fear of destabilisation from Morocco prompted a reshuffle that led Col. Taya to seize power from President Mohamed Haddad on Dec. 12, 1984.

Those familiar with Col. Taya say he is a hesitant off-the-cuff speaker who prefers to make taped broadcast speeches. It takes up to five hours to record and edit a half-hour speech.

He has been seeking better relations with the West after years of friendship with the collapsed communist regimes of the Soviet Bloc.

party spokesman Bechir Hassen. He said five people were killed and an undetermined number injured.

A Spanish businessman who arrived in Nouakchott from Nouadhibou said the army had taken over the port city.

"It was like a garrison town," he said on condition of anonymity.

Turning to Allah in time of need

By Robert Fisk

FROM outside, the apartment blocks of Bab el-Oued look like pigeon lofts — their tiny rectangular windows stuffed with drying bedclothes and tired mattresses, their exterior walls streaked with grime. In a single eight-storey block more than 3,500 men, women and children sleep 10 to a room. As you walk down the gaunt, grey corridors, you are deafened by the shrieks of children, and you can see bunks floor-to-ceiling, as if the inhabitants lived in a barracks — which, in a sense, they do.

Police stations have been built on the roads above Bab el-Oued: the security forces form a permanent army of occupation. No wonder the people here never regarded the Popular Democratic Republic of Algeria as either popular or democratic. The letters FIS — the French acronym for the Islamic Salvation Front — are on every wall.

"Why are you foreigners so surprised we voted for the FIS?" The 39-year-old shopkeeper, unshaven, in an old grey sweater and worn shoes — anonymous in these days of ghostly martial law — pointed eastward in the direction of Algiers airport, where Mohamed Boudiaf, grand old man of the 1954-62 independence war against France, landed after 28 years of exile. "If I was at the airport and had a gun, I would shoot Boudiaf. How dare they impose this old man on us after our election victory? What has he got to do with us? I had never heard of him until they said he would be the new leader of Algeria."

Nor could the shopkeeper have been expected to know of Boudiaf. He was only nine years old when the French left Algeria. For this country's crisis is about democracy as much as religion. With 70 per cent of Algeria's 26 million people under the age of

35 — 44 per cent are under 14 — less than a third of the population have any memory of the guerrilla war with the French.

By calling the frail old FLN man back to Algiers, the authorities have emphasised their isolation from the people they wish to rule and whose democratic choice — however flawed — they have flouted by cancelling the second round of elections.

Algeria's "conversion" to fundamentalist Islam is not a simple matter. The Algerian flag bears the half moon of Islam. The first words of the Koran are printed above Article One of the constitution. Article Two declares that "Islam is the state religion." But the theological renaissance that millions of Algerians have experienced over the past decade bears little resemblance to the ruling National Liberation Front's formal adherence to the faith.

Many FIS members began to follow Islam in earnest about 10 years ago, impressed by young preachers who refused to maintain political discretion in the face of economic mismanagement. The collapse of oil prices and the further impoverishment of Algeria's poor probably guaranteed the rise of fundamentalism — though the FIS rejects the word as a Western invention.

Akli, a worshipper at the "Kabul" mosque, named in honour of guerrillas who fought in Afghanistan, remembers his own realisation that Islam was going to dominate his life. "The discussion of Islam started around the end of the Seventies, in cafes, in the streets — yes, even in bars. It filled a void in Algerian society. Our people were growing poorer. I had always thought of an Islamic republic as a dream, but for me it became a reality. The West tells us that the problems of the Third World are economic, but I came to realise through Islam that this is untrue — that in fact it

is the people who must change."

Akli is a biologist, and a fascination with science characterises much of the FIS's thinking. Educated supporters often turn out to be engineers or communications technicians. Every book shop in Algiers has a section on Islamic literature — and alongside, without exception, are shelves of scientific works. All the FIS candidates in the December parliamentary elections were graduates, most of them scientists. In an Algerian Islamic republic, the government is more likely to be led by technocrats than mullahs. Party supporters say that Islam and science are not only compatible but complementary: both involve absolute truth and understanding.

Science can also be used to mislead. In July, the FIS smuggled a laser machine into Algeria in the diplomatic bag of an Arab embassy, and at a night-time open-air rally wrote the word Allah on the clouds above the city. Many of those present believed they had witnessed a miracle.

But the FIS is not a party of ignorance. Another Bab el-Oued man — unemployed, and again anonymous, since he expects a civil war and mass arrests — could not stifle his rage at the attempts of the former presidents Houari Boumedienne and Chadli Benjedid to repress the depth of religious feeling. "They thought they could keep our allegiance by building mosques — dozens of mosques all over Algeria, even Islamic universities in Algiers and Oran," he said.

"Benjedid's wife started appearing wearing the hejab (head covering) before she disappeared from public view. But you don't love Islam by building mosques. We have to practice our religion in our lives. We were inspired when a preacher, a militant preacher, came forward and abandoned discretion in the

Eighties. He spoke about our real problems. His name was Mustafa Bouwali. He was shot by the police."

Bouwali was in fact the leader of an armed Islamic group, regarded by the FLN government of the day — not without reason — as subversive. The FIS denies any military role, although there are reports that several armed cells exist within the movement, arguing with the leadership over its determination to stay within the political process. One such group is said to be made up of kabulis, the former guerrillas who fought with the Afghan mujahedin.

Yet armed resistance does not have much attraction for the young Algerians who have demanded an Islamic republic. "Look at how we live," the Bab el-Oued shopkeeper says. "Many of my neighbours have 10 or 12 children — we have children until our wives can have no more. Maybe this is because they think the Koran does not like women taking the pill. It is not true. But of course the oldest children have to earn money to feed the youngest children, so our sons work to save their younger brothers. The solution to the problem is part of the problem."

FIS officials say their Islamic republic would not be modelled on Iran, certainly not on Saudi Arabia. It is widely seen as a means of solving Algeria's economic problems: giving purpose to the lives of the 23 per cent of the population who are unemployed; filling the political vacuum left by the old FLN and its decaying nationalism. The promises of continued democracy, respect for political opposition and women's rights do not stand happily alongside the repeated demands for Sharia law. Akli, for example, believes women who do not wish to wear the hejab are "sisters" — "but we think they are sick,



"You can't fool all the people...": the Islamic Salvation Front's poster after round two of the election was cancelled

because they are culturally alienated."

According to Akli, a Islamic punishment for theft would not be applied until the economy had been revived and poverty had disappeared. But he had no doubt that Sharia law would eventually be Algerian law.

The decision by the acting leader of the FIS, Sheikh Abdelkader

Hachani, to ask the democratic parties to join him in opposition to Boudiaf's unconstitutional "council of state," suggests that if the Muslim party could take power it would not — for the present — try to form an Islamic republic.

The real question, however, is about the alternative. The generals control the "council of state," but they have no political programme. The FIS itself has refused to accept Boudiaf's rule. The Algerian nationalism once represented by Ahmed Ben Bella is dead. What is on offer to the people of Bab el-Oued other than rule by the party for whom so many of them voted, whose electoral appeal was so powerful that it had to be suppressed? — The Independent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Bouli
19:00 Les Tortues Ninja
19:30 Macc of Sophie
20:30 News in French
21:15 Varieties
22:00 News in Arabic
22:30 Evening shade
23:10 Colour in the Greek
23:50 News in English
24:20 G.B.H.

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fajr
06:20 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:40 Dhuhr
14:04 'Asr
17:04 Maghreb
18:29 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 63785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terramata Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772361
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assuan International Church Tel. 685726
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 659322
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be clear and cold and winds will be easterly moderate to fresh. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3 / 7
Aqaba 5 / 16
Djerba 5 / 18
Jordan Valley 2 / 16
Yesterday's high temperatures: Am-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Fagih 637909
Dr. Riaz Abu Zina 893295
Dr. Youssef Rashid 896301
Dr. Salim Daboubi 776751
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637035
Nairoudh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Stamcman pharmacy 637660

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630451
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 543402
Police 896380
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Prison Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Reprints 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 64101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 816000
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53000
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53000

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khafid Maternity, J. Amn 6428106
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn 624412
Jabal Amman Maternity 623652
Mallat, J. Amn 636140
Palcine, St. Joseph 6641714
Stamcman Hospital 695131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Musader Hospital 6672219
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/57
Al-Abi, Abdali 6641646

Other Amman Telephone

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 775111/26
Army, Marfa 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224030
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983233
Zarqa National Hospital (09)902560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)98732
Al-Hima Modern Hospital (09)990990
IBBBI:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)73355
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)72225
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)47400
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53000-5, where it

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
05:30 Aqaba (RJ)
05:35 Moscow, Dubai (RJ)
05:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:00 New York, Montreal (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Belgrade (RJ)
19:20 Tripoli (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

19:35 Beirut (ME)
11:05 Bucharest (MS)
DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
10:30 London (RJ)
10:40 Tripoli (RJ)
11:00 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:10 Belgrade, Madrid (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 Rome, Madrid (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Paris (RJ)
12:00 Seidat (RJ)
18:15 Dhahran (RJ)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:15 Laraca (RJ)
21:15 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

18:30 Paris (AF)
02:15 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICES

Upminster price in lbs per kg
Apple (red) 700 / 700
Apple (yellow) 300 / 300
Banana 300 / 300
Banana (Mikatanar) 350 / 350
Beans 700 / 600
Cabbage 180 / 120
Carrot 200 / 150
Cauliflower 250 / 160
Cucumbers (large) 250 / 250
Cucumbers (small) 500 / 500
Eggplant 250 / 200
Grapefruit 180 / 120
Lemon 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 300 / 250
Marrow (small) 500 / 400
Onion (dry) 200 / 150
Onion (green) 220 / 170
Oranges 420 / 180
Pepper (hot) 480 / 420
Pepper (sweet) 480 / 420
Potato 300 / 250
Rudish 140 / 90
Sage 600 / 500
Spinach 280 / 220
Tomato 280 / 220

Committee calls on Russian, Chinese ambassadors to oppose use of force on Libya

AMMAN (J.T.) — The ambassadors of China and the Russian Federation to Jordan Monday stressed that their countries oppose the use of force against Libya over allegations that two of its citizens had been involved in the crash of a Pan Am aircraft over Scotland in 1988.

The two ambassadors gave their countries' views at two separate meetings with a Jordanian Committee that is calling for Solidarity with the Libyan People in the face of Western threats.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the two ambassadors said that their countries believe that this dispute should be settled through diplomatic means.

Last Tuesday's U.N. Security Council resolution calling on Libya to cooperate with international investigations can only be interpreted by China and Russia only within the framework of their understanding of cooperation between the concerned parties, Petra quoted the two ambassadors as saying at their respective meetings with the committee.

The Security Council unanimously urged Libya to surrender suspects sought in the bombings of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland in 1988 and a French airliner over North Africa in 1989. The Russian as well as the Chinese U.N. ambassadors voted for the resolution along with the other members of the council.

Diplomats said the resolution was unprecedented in involving the council in a legal dispute and taking sides in such a dispute among member states.

The 1988 crash caused the death of 270 people while the French airliner accident over North Africa killed 170 persons.

The Russian ambassador was quoted as telling the committee that his country opposed a military crisis that might ensue from this dispute that could adversely

affect the solution of other Middle Eastern problems. Russia opposes any military action against Libya and calls on the concerned parties to reach a solution through peaceful means, said Ambassador Yuri Giradonov.

The ambassador cited an earlier statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry denouncing acts of terrorism but also opposing force to settle disputes, specifically in the case of the two Libyan nationals.

Committee members expressed appreciation of the Russian and Chinese stands and requested that the committee's views be conveyed to the Russian and Chinese governments. The committee urged the government to help resolve the issue through diplomatic channels or through neutral arbitration.

The committee noted that the Libyan government has expressed its readiness to cooperate with

an international tribunal and to respond favourably to the U.N. Security Council demand.

The Lower House of Parliament Sunday issued a statement condemning the U.S., French and British threats against Libya criticising the West as adopting double standard in dealings with world issues.

Libya itself has denied any involvement in the two bombings. According to the British newspaper The Observer Sunday, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi was ready to renounce international terrorism but he challenged the U.S. and Britain to produce evidence against the two Libyans allegedly involved in the Pan Am crash.

Petra said that the Committee calling for Solidarity with the Libyan People was continuing its contacts with various political, economic and social organisations and embassies in Jordan.

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Visiting Taiwanese minister pledges increased assistance

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The head of the economic cooperation delegation from Taiwan currently on a week-long visit to the Kingdom said Sunday that his delegation will recommend direct financial and technological aid to Jordan.

Dr. Kuo Nan-Hung, minister of state for scientific and technological affairs, said that his country donated about \$20 million to Jordan last year.

"We will recommend to our government (that it provide) direct financial and technological assistance, especially in the field of education," he said.

Dr. Nan-Hung also expressed Taiwan's eagerness to enter into joint ventures with Jordan through international consortiums, especially in the field of technical training in electrical power generation.

The delegation's visit to Jordan comes in response to an invitation extended by His

Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to boost cooperation between the two countries. Members of the delegation visited sites in Jordan, including the Jordan Valley, the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST), the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) and the Natural Resources Authority (NRA).

The delegation also met with His Majesty King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan and a number of ministers. The delegation's visit was designed to explore ways Taiwan can help Jordan in the fields of energy through oil shell retorting or refining; electricity; transportation by setting up railway linkage to transport potassium; and agricultural projects, especially those dealing with irrigation in the Jordan Valley.

Dr. Nan-Hung also said his delegation is interested in helping Jordan in the educational sector. He said his country is going to help set up a depart-

ment for electrical maintenance training and will help upgrade mechanical capabilities in the RSS.

Dr. Nan-Hung said that he believed Jordan is a country in dire need of economic assistance. He said he is more convinced of this after having learned that unemployment in the Kingdom rose in the past two years to about 20 to 30 per cent.

"We have to help Jordan in building up its industrial sector," Dr. Nan-Hung said. "We in Taiwan will provide direct assistance to the Kingdom through import and export."

Dr. Nan-Hung also told the Jordan Times that a special task force team from Taiwan will come to Jordan in the near future to make an in-depth study about improving the government's support of local industries.

He praised His Majesty King Hussein's efforts and the "inspiring ideas and initiatives of His Royal Highness (Crown Prince Hassan)."

European bank extends JD 5.4 million loan to Jordan

LUXEMBOURG (J.T.) — The European Investment Bank (EIB) has announced a loan of ECU 6 million (JD 5.4 million) for extending the sewage collection and treatment system in Zarqa, to northeast of Amman.

The operation, arranged under the third EC-Jordan Financial Protocol, carries a 2 per cent interest subsidy financed from Community budgetary resources, according to a press statement. It follows on from an initial EIB loan for the Zarqa sewerage system in 1986.

The funds will enable the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) to lay a further 164km of sewers serving six districts around Zarqa, at Al Batrawi, Jabal Al Shammal and Jabal Faisal. The works, scheduled for completion by the end of 1994, will connect some 90,000 inhabitants (rising to 150,000 by the year 2010) to the city's existing sewage collection and treatment system, thereby considerably improving hygienic conditions for the local population, safeguarding groundwater resources and allowing recycling of treated wastewater, the statement said.

The project forms part of the Jordanian authorities' programme for preserving and managing the country's water resources more efficiently, a goal supported by the EIB through loans for sewerage systems in Zarqa (1986), Madaba and Ma'an (1984) advanced under previous financial protocols, the statement added.

This latest operation is the seventh to be mounted by the EIB in Jordan under the Third Financial Protocol in conjunction with financing provided by the EIB now totals ECU 57 million (JD 51.6 million) in loans from its own resources plus ECU 2 million (JD 1.8 million) in risk capital assistance drawn from the Community budget, the statement said.

Doctors stage sit-in to protest JMC tests; health minister defends exams

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Over 600 medical specialists began an indefinite sit-in in front of the Professional Associations Building in Shmeisani Monday in protest of the methods of evaluation adopted by the Jordan Medical Council (JMC) of their medical certificates which they obtained from universities abroad, protestors said.

Protestors said that they obtained specialisation certificates with honours from universities abroad, yet the JMC has set very difficult examinations that are impossible to pass.



Aref Al Bataineh

"We have many, many examples of physicians who would have been medical 'fortunes' had they been able to work in Jordan as specialists," one protesting cardiologist said. "Dr. Salem Bakr, for example, is a specialist of cardiovascular diseases and an internist certified by the American Boards of Cardiovascular diseases and Internal Medicine, and the head of the Cardiovascular Department of Saint Luke's Hospital in Missouri, USA, yet he was unable to pass the examination set by the JMC in two attempts."

"Dr. Bakr is now a world renowned cardiologist, who writes for and is quoted extensively in international medical journals," and he left Jordan after giving up on the JMC examination system," he said.

Minister of Health, Aref Al

Bataineh, said that the sit-in will not result in any changes to the JMC's accreditation methods.

"We are concerned for the Jordanian people first and foremost and we must ensure that physicians meet the highest standards before they practise as specialists," Dr. Bataineh said.

"Most of the protestors out there in the sit-in have specialisations from un-accredited universities, because the ones who set the exam (of) the JMC, and who got their specialisations from good universities, sailed through the exam with no difficulty," he said, adding that he came across some certificates that stated that the practice of medicine in the specialisation specified is restricted to Third World countries.

According to another protestor, the JMC was responsible

for preventing yet another very rare specialisation to be introduced to Jordan that would have revolutionised the medical emergencies system in Jordanian hospitals.

"Dr. Suhail," they said, without mentioning the family name, "came to Jordan to introduce the emergency medicine specialisation to the emergency rooms of hospitals. His specialisation enables him to act as a specialist for each ailment separately. If Dr. Suhail, who is certified by the American Board for Medicine, was able to pass that impossible test set by the JMC, we would have had many doctors train under him and we would have serviced the Jordanian people by this," he said.

Another protestor said that of the more than 1,000 specialists who sat for the medical examination, only 45 passed, and "until we got the impossible criteria set by the JMC reversed, we will continue with the sit-in," he said.

"The criteria set by the JMC are unlawful and come in contradiction with a statement by the Prime Ministry's for the interpretation of laws. Until the JMC's laws are adjusted to match those of the Office for the Interpretation of Laws, we will sit here," he said.

Dr. Bataineh stressed that the JMC examination is designed to ensure that only qualified doctors serve in Jordan.

"We make sure that applicants obtained certificates that are approved in the country

these physicians received the certificates from," Dr. Bataineh said.

"We also make sure that candidates sitting the exam have studied medicine for a duration of time that meets with the standards set by the JMC. We also emphasise that certificates of specialisation obtained from abroad be the result of an examination by the university," he added.

Dr. Bataineh said that only 300 physicians applied for the medical specialisation exam. He said that after processing the papers of 110 applicants, 45 passed the exam.

The president of the Jordan Medical Association and vice president for the JMC Ishaq Marqaa said that the association and the council have the Jordanian people's interests in mind when they review the specialisation certificates with care.

"The criteria set requests that applicants present their original certificates. When the applications are reviewed carefully and the applicants meet all the criteria, they are approved. Candidates expect us to process papers with miraculous speed," he said, adding that the sit-in was arranged on a personal basis and was not even organised with the medical association.

"I do not see any reason for the sit-in as the JMC and its specialised scientific committee there follows the law closely in its certificate accreditation laws," Dr. Marqaa said.

JEA opens seminar highlighting energy conservation methods

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Monday opened a three day seminar on electric energy measurement and instruments designed to help curtail high energy cost and improve electric energy performance in various sectors.

JEA Director General Mohammad Saeed Arafeh told the Jordan Times that the seminar was part of series of meetings to be organised by the JEA this year intended to help control and reduce energy consumption in the Kingdom.

At the end of the three day meeting, he said, a follow up committee will be set up by the participants to implement resolutions and recommendations and report on the progress of work to the managers of the various participating institutions as well as the JEA.

In his address at the opening session, Mr. Arafeh noted that energy measurement equipment are continually upgraded and modernised to cope with the growing needs of a fast developing world. This seminar, he said, will offer the participants the chance to exchange views and experiences and decide on appropriate solutions to problems facing their institutions.

Mr. Arafeh said that the JEA was aiming through the series of seminars and through cooperation with the various parties to transfer modern technology and know-how to the Kingdom in energy-related matters and to help the various institutions deal with energy problems.

He said that the JEA hopes to organise another seminar dealing with switching distribution systems and another on rationalisation of energy consumption in industry and a third on training personnel in energy matters in

Arab countries.

The meeting was opened with an address by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Ali Abul Ragheb, who underlined the role of energy measurement equipment and their benefit to consumers. He expressed hope the participants will pool their ideas and expertise and agree on a unified pattern of measurement for the benefit of the whole country.

Participants in the meeting will review 16 working papers submitted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, the JEA, the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPSCO), the Irbid District Electricity Company, the Jordan Cement Factories Company and the Arab Potash Company. These papers will deal with various types of energy measurement instruments.

According to Mr. Arafeh, a number of the planned seminars will be held in the first quarter of this year.

Study sheds light on returnees' condition

AMMAN (J.T.) — A study conducted by the National Centre for Educational Research and Development has revealed that 62 per cent of the total number of projects planned by expatriates returning to Jordan from Kuwait and the Gulf region will be set up in Amman governorate at the estimated average cost of JD 103,000 per project.

The rest will be set up in Zarqa, the second largest city in the Kingdom, the study found.

The study covers four aspects of socio-economic matters related to the expatriates, dealing with their general living conditions in the Kingdom, the living conditions of families whose heads are still abroad, projects which expatriates intend to carry out and

recommendations to the government about the situation.

According to the study, 63.41 per cent of returnee families have at least one unemployed person, 22 per cent have two persons and 9 per cent have three.

Out of the total, 30 per cent of the families have at least one student at school, 24 per cent have two children and 20 per cent

had three.

Out of the overall number of expatriate families, 47 per cent own their own homes while the rest live in rented homes, according to the study.

It said that the expatriates intend to carry out a total of JD 304 million worth of projects, of which 26 per cent will come in the form of loans from local banks.

Cold front to bring rain, possibly snow

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — People in Jordan have to endure the current cold spell and frost through today after which rain and possibly snow on hilly regions are expected, according to the Meteorology Department Monday.

The announcement was made by department director Ali Abanda who said the whole eastern Mediterranean region has been under dry and cold weather conditions since last Thursday as a result of a high depression in central Europe. The depression has opened the way for a mass of cold wind to blow towards the region from the polar areas and Siberia through Iran, Iraq and Turkey down to the Arabian peninsula and the Gulf.

Dr. Abanda said that the cold wind brought about a drop in temperatures causing frost in all regions, including the northern Jordan Valley areas. In some parts like Shobak in the south, minus 10 degrees Celsius temperatures were recorded. In Amman, it was minus 3 degrees Celsius, with the higher temperature during the day time reaching to 7.5 degrees, said Dr. Abanda.

He noted that by Wednesday the Kingdom will be affected by a low depression with heavy rain preceded by snow in the southern regions extending gradually to the north, and continuing through Thursday. He said that winds will be then turn from easterly to south westerly, ending the cold spell.

Local press reports spoke of heavy damage to crops in the northern Jordan Valley areas due to the cold spell and frost. They said that bananas, marrows and potatoes were among the main crops damaged.

The expected heavy rains are bound to complete the replenishment of the country's dams. According to Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wisbah, most of the reservoirs behind dams are almost full thanks to the previous rainfalls. He told the Jordan Times that the King Talal Dam, the largest in Jordan with a total capacity of 80 million cubic metres, now has 70 million cubic metres of water. The Wadi Al Arab Dam has 10 million cubic metres out of a total capacity of 15 million and other dams are full or about to be filled, he said.

Agricultural specialists had predicted that the coming agricultural season would be one of the best in many years because of the heavy rainfall.

Labour related issues reviewed

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kubaiti discussed with Indonesian ambassador to Jordan, Mohammad Hassan Adami, labour-related matters.

Discussions covered vocational training for workers and setting up joint income-generating projects employing the largest number of workers.

The minister earlier had a meeting with the visiting secretary general of the International Federation of Arab Labour Unions, Hassan Jamam. Discussion covered the condition of Arab workers in general and the impact of the current political situation in the Arab World on workers and labourers as well as questions like unemployment in the Arab World, the increased migration of skilled Arab workers and the absorption of non-Arab workers in the Arab World.

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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy to be discussed

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the first Arab conference on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy due to start next Sunday in Tripoli, Libya. Jordan will be represented at the conference by a delegation which will be led by Ministry of Energy Secretary General Asem Ghoshah and will comprise officials from the ministry, the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) and the Natural Resources Authority. A large number of experts from Arab countries will participate in the conference.

Kabariti appointed acting foreign minister

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal decree was issued Monday appointing Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti as acting foreign minister while Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber is still abroad.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Art exhibition by Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan and Italian ambassador to Jordan Franco de Courten at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery — 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- ★ Exhibition of the activities of the Goethe Institute in Amman at the Institute, Jabal Amman.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Alia Shanti Amoura at Alia Art Gallery.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Galgamesh" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

SUPER BOWL

- ★ The 1992 Super bowl football game between the Washington Redskins and the Buffalo Bills will be shown at the American Centre's auditorium — 7 p.m.

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Right step to take

WE COULD both understand and sympathise with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's agonising debate on whether to attend the multilateral peace talks in Moscow. The Syrian government had similar difficulties out of fear that regional issues will end up discussed in isolation from the basic peace negotiations centred on the implementation of the U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Of course the rhetoric coming out of Israel, especially that of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, to the effect that Israel has no intention to withdraw from Arab territories occupied in 1967 added to the already deep Arab suspicion that at least the incumbent Israeli government is bent on frustrating all efforts to realise a permanent and lasting peace in the region.

The PLO, nevertheless, acted wisely and correctly when it decided in favour of participating in the Moscow talks. A brief look at the political landscape surrounding the conference is all that we need to take in order to see why.

To begin with, the Moscow conference was going to be held with or without the presence of the Palestinians. It would have been infinitely more problematic and damaging from especially the Palestinian point of view if they had left the stage only for Israel. Since the PLO strives for statehood and recognition as a Middle Eastern state, it is only natural that its voice and concerns about the regional issues be heard right at the outset of every effort to find appropriate remedies for them.

Second, there is little doubt that what goes in the Moscow forum will have an impact on the other dimensions connected to the basic peace talks between Israel and the Arab side, and that is essentially why a positive perspective about the multilateral talks can have a tremendous bearing on the political and security conflicts between the two sides. By creating an overall positive environment in the area, the psychological barriers would be easier to tear down. All serious observers of the Arab-Israeli conflicts concede that mutual fears, suspicions and taboos between the antagonists impede negotiations on essentials and render the chances of success that much more remote.

Granted the Arab parties are assuming greater risk by accepting to debate at this early stage regional subjects that aim to normalise relations between the countries of the area. But this is exactly what the Arab countries need to do and invest in, in order to show the whole world that the Arabs are very serious about taking the peace option. Besides, what possible good could come out of staying aloof from an international meeting, especially one that is going to be convened in any case. Negative orientation towards such a worldly exercise may simply give cause for the erroneous conviction that the Arab World is not serious about full peace in all its dimensions. Israel would have been more than glad to capitalise on Arab absenteeism and this time the PLO has acted responsibly by denying it such an opportunity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily said Monday that the Moscow meetings, starting Tuesday, are between the United States and the world because it is the United States which continues to act for the Israelis in the international fora. By providing the Israelis with military and economic assistance the United States has enhanced Israel's intransigence and hardened its position vis-a-vis the Arab World's demand for an implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, said the paper. In the multinational talks in Moscow, the United States will be facing a world demanding that the American protect the international legitimacy and implement Security Council resolutions which call for Israeli forces' withdrawal from Arab lands, said the daily. It said any attempt to place the horse before the cart, that is to discuss secondary topics without dealing with the substantial issue of Israeli withdrawal, can by no means achieve any success. What is needed first, is the restoration of Arab sovereignty and lands and a pledge by the Jewish state to respect the will and the resolutions of the international community, stressed the paper. The Arabs realise that they alone can not achieve this and they rely on the United States to pressure Israel into accepting the requirements of peace based on justice; but they can by no means accept any formula that does not cater to the Arab Nation's aspirations or compromises the rights of the Palestinians in their homeland, the paper continued. It said that in the Moscow negotiations, Washington is facing the whole world, represented by the many nations taking part in the talks, and it remains to be seen whether the United States is willing to uphold international principles or disregard the feelings of the people of the whole world.

The public has the right to know what is happening to the water of the Zarga River, which feeds the King Talal Dam, and the secret behind the new warnings issued by Zarga governor to the owners of factories along the river, said a columnist in Al Ra'i daily Monday. The governor has over the past few days issued a number of warnings to the factories for their failure to abide by safety precautionary measures related to the waste matter dumped into the river water, said Nazih. The writer said that the dumping of untreated waste water had in the past caused a public outcry, raised primarily by the farmers whose crops sustained damage and by the authorities which discovered that the water was not well treated and had to close down more than 20 factories as a temporary measure until they had installed treatment equipment. The public has the right to know why the warnings are being issued again and whether they were issued to those factories which failed to install equipment or those which did install equipment that does not function and of no use, the writer demanded. He said that no leniency should be shown towards the factories which fail to comply with the public health safety measures since such practice can only harm national interest. He said that the concerned authorities should ensure that waste water treatment equipment has been installed, something which would save everybody any embarrassment.

The View from Fourth Circle

The bitter taste of neocolonial pizza

ONE year ago this week, the Gulf was raging at full blast; this month many journalists and analysts have taken the opportunity of the anniversary to look back and assess the changes in the region since January 1991. However, to be really useful, the time frame and geographic focus of such an assessment should be extended back to well before the Gulf crisis. Only a longer perspective of Arab-Western political relationships can explain why, for example, the U.S.-led camp maintains the U.N. trade embargo against Iraq and insists that the Iraqi people must continue to suffer and die until they overthrow their leadership — even though this was not formally demanded in the U.N. resolutions against Iraq, and President Bush repeatedly stated and still states that he has no quarrel with the Iraqi people.

We have to transcend the narrow focus on Kuwait/Iraq and the time frame of the last year because we now know that the Gulf crisis and war were much larger than Kuwait, and much older than the events of 1990. We know that the terms of reference of the Gulf crisis did not comprise only the freedom of Kuwait from the grip of Iraq; in our view, they also comprised the freedom of the entire Arab World from the neocolonial grip of the West, for the struggle between genuine sovereignty and neocolonial subjugation is what the Middle East is all about today.

In recent decades, the West repeatedly told us that we, Arabs, were free and sovereign states, that we had long ago shed the chains of colonialism. We are told that we are formally independent, and can choose any arrangements we like among ourselves or with foreign powers. This explanation sounds logical enough, but it is a naive and incomplete interpretation of the real world and daily grind suffered by the people of the Arab World.

The Arab states are formally independent and sovereign, with their own flags, borders, passports, armies, and United Nations seats. But sovereignty is not the sole test here. The real question at the heart of the contemporary Arab dilemma are not about the formality of statehood, but rather about the viability and durability of national community. They are the same questions that were asked about Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the period 1989-1991.

The questions are relevant to the Arab World, because they started to be asked here throughout the 1980s: How well do the existing states meet the real needs and aspirations of their people? How much do they allow their own people to express themselves and govern themselves? Are they elaborate facades that primarily serve the interests of distant imperial capitals and their local commercial agents? Are they cruel confirmation that a state can be at once sovereign and independent, yet subservient to foreign interests and a failure to its own people? Are the Arab states little more than sunny, Oriental Romanias, governed by the morality of the patronage politics of Chicago?

These questions ran through many Arab minds in the 1980s, and coloured the thinking of most Arabs in the first weeks of August 1990. They continue to provide the single most important political impetus for challenge and change in this region of nearly 300 million people. These are the essential criteria by which Arabs and others in the Third World assess the ugly transformation of colonialism into neocolonialism — for neocolonialism is the threat that lingers well after the American and British troops

have left the region. Neocolonialism is the illusion of Arab sovereignty, juxtaposed against the fact of Arab weakness and dependence on the West.

Unlike the crass colonialism of the eighteenth century, when white settlers from the north physically occupied and colonised the lands of darker-skinned natives from the south, neocolonialism is a more subtle business, an endeavour of greed in the smooth but deadly guise of free choice, mutual interest, development, and cooperation. In the neocolonial world, white settlers from the north do not occupy the countries of darker-skinned natives in the south, they give them "independence." They do not plunder Third World resources, but rather "buy" them for cash. They do not destroy the land, they "develop" it. They do not deprive the native populations of consumer and capital goods, they "sell" them everything they need or desire. They do not insist on a direct military presence, but rather sign "security agreements" with those Arabs who look for security under the skirts of distant emperors. Or so it all seems on the surface.

But the surface deceives, and conceals ugly dependencies that take time to become clear. In the last four decades, most "independent" Arab countries have found it easier to export commodities, raw materials, or human beings to the markets of the north, rather than to develop their own productive and integrated economies. The cash earned from exports is used to import food, arms, technology, and consumer goods in ever-increasing quantities, fuelling a cycle of dependence that has maintained the Arabs as perpetual wards of the West. Inter-Arab trade still makes up only about six per cent of total Arab trade, and most Arab states have to plead for cash help from the industrialised West, while trying desperately, as in Algeria this month, to prevent their own people from expressing their real political and social sentiments.

Poor countries with severe population pressures rely on aid and loans to make it from one year to the next, regardless of whether they are big countries like Egypt or Algeria or small countries like Jordan or Tunisia. Oil-producing Arab countries with small populations and large financial surpluses invest most of their excess cash in the banks and economies of their former masters in the north (a recent World Bank study estimates that only about five per cent of Arab financial surpluses are invested in the Arab World). Self-imposed, unelected Arab elites rely on massive militarism to maintain their power and privilege. The promise of independence, mired in the reality of national deficiency and worsening neocolonial dependence, has proven to be a fiction for most Arabs. That fiction is most apparent in the micro-states of the Gulf.

Small, oil-rich, and people-poor countries — the Kuwaits, Bahrainis, Abu Dhabi, Omans, and Qataris of this world — are an audacious experiment in nation-building. These diminutive countries have used their substantial oil wealth to import everything they need, including police forces, labour, trees, and food. Even water, the traditional determinant of quality of life in the arid Arabian Peninsula, is now magically transformed from sea water — amidst still serious talk of importing water in tankers from Japan or securing it from icebergs towed from the Antarctic.

Such bold innovation constantly charts new ground in the business of nationhood. It redefines the very concept of a nation-state, throwing out irksome notions that have determined the fate of peoples during the last five thousands years of human civilisation — indigenous populations, hard work and sacrifice by the people themselves, productive lands, self-sustaining local natural resource bases, regional complementarities, the ability and will to defend one's community, and commitment to a national identity rooted in a long local history. These principles do not apply in lands where God and geology provide sustenance in the form of oil in the earth, and Western bankers and arms merchants provide dreams in the form of illusory security that costs tens of billions of Arab dollars every year. The neocolonial instinct drives the West to wage war in the Arab and Third World to assure its people's jobs, while the unemployment rates of 30 per cent and above in many countries is deemed irrelevant. The "new world order," a not-so-subtle hoax designed to dress up neocolonialism in acceptable moral clothing, dictates that the north strives for comfort while the south strives for survival.

Most of the income from Arab oil and gas exports — perhaps several thousand billion dollars since the early 1970s — has found its way back to Western markets and banks. It arrives in different forms, such as payments for Western exports of food, arms, and capital and consumer goods, bank deposits and investments in Western real estate, government securities, private corporate shares, or, more recently, rental fees for armies and payments for short-term security agreements. One continues to ask: Whom do the micro-states of the Gulf serve more efficiently, their own people or the chambers of commerce of Houston and Manchester? Several hundred million Arabs and Muslims are asking this question with increasing urgency, and most of them will not be satisfied with or silenced by extra helpings of deep pan pizza or new models of non-stick frying pans. Neocolonialism tries to turn us into little New Jerseys, perpetual consuming machines, and addicts in the sickness of buying and selling commodities, people, flags, and allegiances. Neocolonialism wants to make us merchandise, but we refuse to play the game, even at gunpoint. We refuse to bathe in the glow of the cash register lights, or be lulled by the promise of money changing hands.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonial exploitation was direct and overt. In the late twentieth century, neocolonialism is more sophisticated and covert. Third World countries that were granted sovereignty continue to suffer such severe national shortcomings in food, cash, defence, and capital needs that they must rely heavily on their former colonial masters. Yet, the Middle East remains as unstable and dependent as ever, and its serious deficiencies in water, food, and other basic, life-sustaining, commodities are nearing the panic point in some cases. Overt colonialism may no longer be acceptable, but its neocolonial offspring continues to prove just as profitable. That, it seems, is what counts for the West, that is what most Arabs reject through their reawakening during the 1980s and their defiance during the Gulf crisis, and that is the underlying issue that was dramatised by the events of last year and should be assessed this month.

By Rami. G. Khoori

Baby-friendly hospitals

The following article is reprinted from a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) news feature.

FIVE years from now, thousands of hospitals throughout the world could have a plaque by the front entrance designating them as "baby-friendly." To qualify for baby-friendly status, hospitals will have to comply with a new code of practice drawn up by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The code is designed to ensure that all maternity units give babies the best possible start in life by encouraging their mothers to breastfeed.

Decline in breastfeeding

The "baby-friendly" idea is the latest advance in a ten year campaign to reverse the trend towards the bottle-feeding of infants.

The reason for the decline in breastfeeding, says UNICEF's 1992 State of the World's Children report, is that more families are living in cities, more women are going out to work, and more advertisements are persuading mothers that bottle-feeding is more modern and sophisticated.

In fact, breastmilk is the world's most sophisticated food, says UNICEF. It is so nutritionally complete that an infant normally needs no other food or drink for the first four to six months of life. It is hygienic and inexpensive. It immunises infants

against common infections. It can protect mothers against pregnancy. And it reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Apart from being inferior in quality, powdered milk mixes badly with poverty. Without enough money to buy adequate quantities of powder, and without enough education to read the instructions on the tin, many families overdilute commercial milk powders. And without clean water or sterilising equipment, fridges or fuel, the milk powder is often mixed with contaminated water and fed to babies from unsterile bottles.

As a result, bottle-fed babies in poor communities have been found to be approximately 15 times more likely to die from diarrhoeal disease and four times more likely to die from pneumonia than babies who are exclusively breastfed.

Overall, the World Health Organisation estimates that more than a million children's lives could be saved every year if all mothers gave their babies nothing but breastmilk for the first four to six months of life.

The poorer the circumstances the greater the risks of bottle-feeding. But breastfeeding is best for all babies, says UNICEF. One study has shown that babies in New York are three times more likely to be hospitalised if they are bottle-fed.

Advertising ban

Ten years ago, WHO and UN-

ICEF published a "code of practice" to try to stop infant formula companies from advertising their products to the public. The new "baby-friendly" code for hospitals seeks to reinforce this by making sure that maternity units are on the side of breastfeeding rather than bottle-feeding. "Unwittingly, maternity services have often contributed to the decline of breastfeeding," says UNICEF's Executive Director James Grant. "The vast majority of hospitals and maternity services have tragically depended on free supplies of infant formula. Too often babies are separated from their mothers at birth and fed sugar and water or infant formula from a bottle before the mother's milk has 'come in.' Even one or two bottle-feeds increases the risk that a mother will have difficulty in breastfeeding."

The new code, which sets out Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, is now being communicated by WHO and UNICEF to virtually every hospital in the world. All hospitals that consistently follow the code will be awarded "baby-friendly" status. The 10 steps are:

- Have a written breastfeeding policy.
- Train all health staff to implement the policy.
- Inform all pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding.
- Help mothers start breastfeeding within half an hour of birth.

- Show mothers the best way to breastfeed.
- Give newborn infants no other food or drink (unless medically indicated).
- Allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
- Give no dummies or soothers.
- Help start breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them.

Men can help

UNICEF has called on all manufacturers to end free and low-cost supplies of infant formula to maternity units and hospitals by December 1992. The International Association of Infant Food Manufacturers has agreed to the request in principle and promised its cooperation.

Many women in the developing world do not give birth in hospitals, the report acknowledges. And even those who do enter maternity units usually stay for only one or two days. So the worldwide campaign to make hospitals more baby-friendly, says UNICEF, is only one step among the many needed in the journey back towards breastfeeding.

"Mothers need the support of hospitals," says the report. "But if they are to continue breastfeeding they will also need the support of their employers, their families, their communities, and their husbands."

Ex-Soviet, Yugoslav states try to join European forum

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuters

LONDON — A flood of new states from the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, including Kyrgyzstan on the Chinese border, will attempt to join the European Security Conference this week, prompting the question: What is Europe?

Diplomats are hoping to avoid a bruising public row over applications by Slovenia and Croatia to join the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that could prevent U.N. peace-keeping troops being sent to war-torn Yugoslavia.

Foreign ministers from the CSCE states, which currently number 38, will meet in Prague on Thursday and Friday to discuss strengthening the grouping's role in preserving security amid the dizzying changes taking place on the continent.

But senior officials, who start meeting in the Czechoslovak capital on Monday to thrash out the agenda, will find much of their time taken up with membership applications from new-born countries, diplomats said. They said the most controversial issue looked like being applications from the old Yugoslav republics of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia.

Macedonia appears to have virtually no support — it has been recognised only by Bulgaria — but Croatia and Slovenia, recognised by European Community and some other countries earlier this month, enjoy wide backing.

But the Serbian-dominated rump Yugoslavia, which remains a CSCE member, could block the applications under a unanimity rule while partisans of Slovenia and Croatia could argue that Yugoslavia itself should leave the grouping and re-apply.

"The important thing is that this should not lead to a row," one British official said. "We need the continuing cooperation of the Yugoslav representatives in New York to get the U.N. peace-keeping force on the ground."

The former Soviet seat in the CSCE has passed to Russia and applications have so far been received from the ex-Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, German officials reported.

Germany holds the rotating chairmanship of the CSCE until

Czechoslovakia takes it over on Thursday at what will be only the second session of the group's policy-making council.

Diplomats said it was agreed in principle that all the republics could join — even though, some are far from Europe since they were formerly represented by the Soviet Union and non-European countries the United States and Canada belong.

It was likely that Ukraine and Belarus, already U.N. members, would be admitted this week but the others might be asked to wait until a team of inspectors had visited them to ensure they were abiding by CSCE commitments, they said.

The commitments cover human rights, military confidence-building measures and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Some neutral members had objected that Armenia and Azerbaijan, which are fighting a low-level war over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, do not meet the pledges, officials said.

The CSCE had its inaugural summit in 1975, but after years of sterile East-West arguments over human rights, only took off as a new pan-European forum after the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war in the late 1980s.

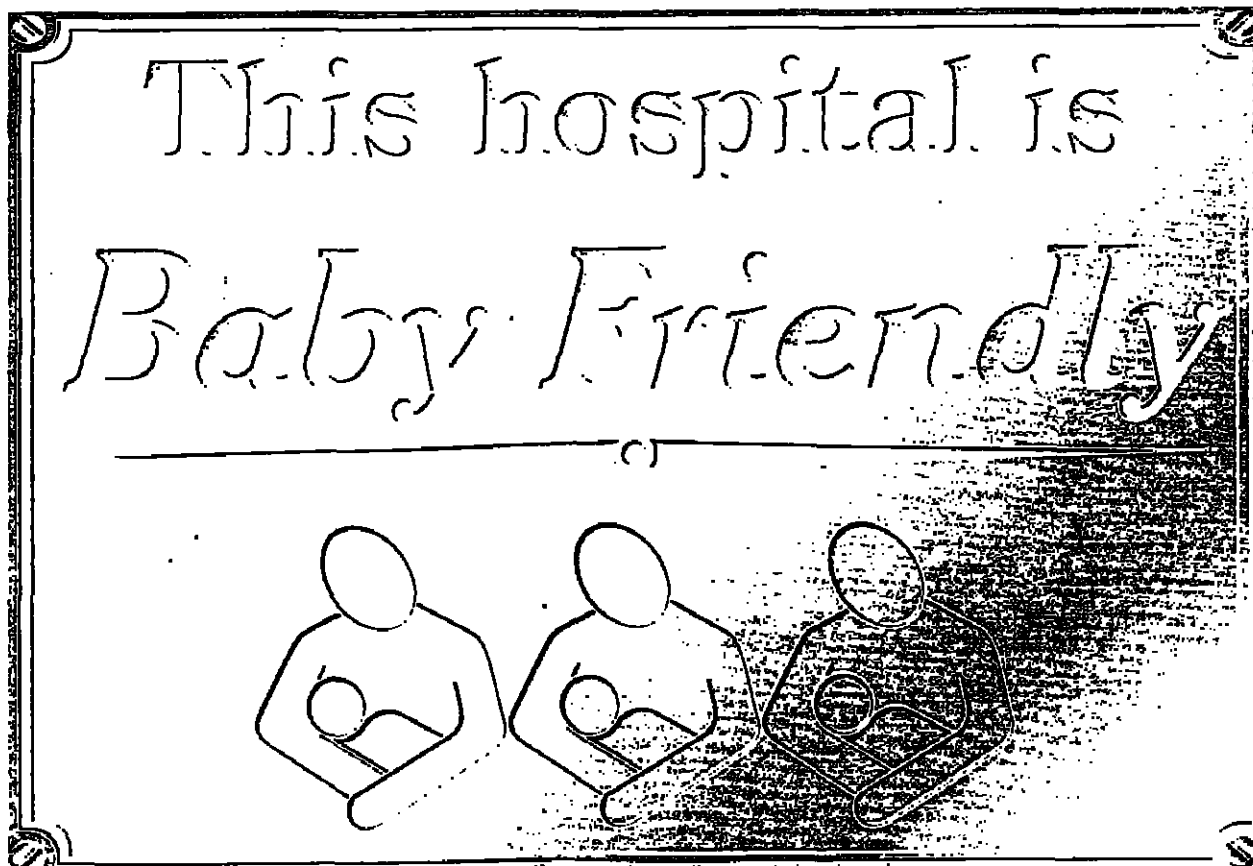
Unlike NATO and the European Community, it includes all European states, a point seen as both its main strength and weakness. The unanimity rule has made its proceedings slow and painful, even in the post-communist age.

The rule effectively choked its first attempt at crisis management, a bid to mediate in the Yugoslav conflict. Serious peace-making efforts were left to the EC and the U.N.

Diplomats said the Prague meeting was expected to broaden the functions of a CSCE Conflict-Prevention Centre already set up in Vienna so that it could put together mediation missions.

An office for free elections in Warsaw will also be expanded into an office for democratic institutions and human rights that will advise countries on such matters as free trade unions and a free press, they said.

The CSCE states are also expected to pledge support for U.N. efforts to keep tabs on conventional weapons sales and to start talks on arms export controls, a topic of concern since the fall of the Soviet Union left its republics awash with weaponry.



Plaque designating baby friendly hospitals, a code of practice drawn up by UNICEF and WHO

هكذا من أجل

Lifting the veil from Islamic Britain

By Dina Rabbovitch

ADEELA RASHID is a Muslim, and her daughter does not eat pork. The headmaster at her daughter's school was informed and vegetarian meals were provided. "The meals were appalling," says Mrs. Rashid. "They weren't used to preparing good vegetarian food, so they'd give the children chili beans daily."

The dinner ladies could see the children weren't eating much, so one day one of them put something else in front of Adeela's daughter. The dish contained pork. "Come on, eat up," the dinner lady cajoled. "I don't eat that," said Adeela's daughter. "Go on," said the woman. "You are just messing about — eat up."

Mrs. Rashid accepts that these people mean no harm to her children, but believes their ignorance does damage.

At 40 and with six children, Mrs. Rashid would describe herself as a woman who gets on with her life quietly, but this week she takes on a controversial public role, as deputy speaker of the new Muslim Parliament of Great Britain.

For Adeela Rashid the agenda is not fundamentalism and Salman Rushdie, but job prospects for her children, schooling that does not subvert the teachings of home, circumcision easily available in hospitals and respect for Muslim women — both inside and outside Islam.

"Our people in the NHS are pan-carriers," she says, "and others are discriminated against because they are Muslims. On the streets, they call our children Saddam — before the Gulf war, it was Faki."

The Muslim parliament is not an elected body, its 155 members were selected from 40 "Muslim manifesto" groups set up by Dr. Kalim Siddiqui around Britain, and the use of the word parliament has attracted some criticism. Like other leading members, Mrs. Rashid was appointed by a core group last October. "Look," she says, "ideally in Islam we would have called ourselves Hizbollah, the party of God, people helping Islam, but if we said Hizbollah can you imagine the outcry? So we chose the word parliament — we're not saying it's Westminster."

Ask Mrs. Rashid what effect the 24 women will have on the total membership of the parliament and she asserts that while they may be in the background they are strong and respected. "The chauvinism in Islam happened because women were not educated — only men knew the laws. But now we know our rights given to us by Islam and we're not going to be satisfied with anything less."

Behind the Georgian facade of the Rashids' flat in Brixton is a world kept from prying eyes. Inside all is stripped bare. The living room is scrupulously tidy, prayer mats are piled in a corner, the word processor and reference books stacked against the wall. Mrs. Rashid holds her youngest son, just four months, in her arms, while her four-year-old turns somersaults. Her husband does not live here. He was the imam of the local mosque but has moved back to Nigeria. She won't be drawn on when he left England. "He is an African," she says. "He'd been here for some time, and he wanted to go back



Two Muslim girls in Britain who had won the right to wear scarfs in school

— he's teaching there. I visit him sometimes. We have already decided that when the children are grown up, I will have the choice to join him."

Mrs. Rashid is black, an Afro-Caribbean Muslim. She returned to Islam, as she puts it, when she was 20, after hearing mullahs men like her husband, talk about Allah and the Prophet. She keeps her hair covered and wears trousers or dresses that cover everything except her hands and face. She does not wear a veil.

"I have never had worries about whether or not to cover my face," she says. "The command from the Koran is to show your face and hands only. In some Arab countries, because of the desert storms, the women started to wear veils. My hijab — my covering — gives me my dignity, my identity. I find that people, men who don't even know me, are more respectful than to some person who has curled her hair, and is saying, look at me."

One of her daughters is at a Muslim school, the other is not. The Muslim parliament will lobby for more state help to set up schools, and included in their

30-year plan is a university. "We don't get any aid," she says. "I think that whenever there is an application from the Muslims, then people say: 'Oh, the Muslims, they have Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, where all the billions come from, so we can skip them.' But this is a fallacy, because we don't get any support — I think some of our leaders here don't like to go and ask for these things. So we get nothing from anywhere."

For a moment, she sounds bitter. "I have no argument with anything in Islam, but what I argue with is the rich oil sheikhs who wear the clothes of the pious, but they are all over the night spots and gambling, which is forbidden. Then the next day they're praying. We don't need playboys when people are dying in Sudan; it is a shame people have to put on functions such as Band Aid while the money is right there. They wouldn't miss 0.5 per cent of it."

Reverting to her normal, measured tones, she explains that, since her husband was frequently away, she had time to become

active in local Muslim groups and the Muslim Women's Institute. She feels her main role, however, is within the community, using the contacts she is developing through the parliament to get things done, making up for the lack of clout Muslims have too often felt they suffered from in multi-cultural Britain.

"One time," Mrs. Rashid tells, "I had to go to the police station, and when I came in the woman constable just sat there behind the desk. I had to say, 'Can you come to the counter, so that I can say what I have to say to you' — but here attitude was, oh, it's just another one of them coming in, I'll stay seated."

The baby on Adeela Rashid's lap was recently circumcised. He is in some pain, because the circumcision was not done early enough. "My first son had his circumcision done in South London Women's Hospital, before we were discharged. But now that hospital's closed, and in King's College you have to come back and make an appointment."

Mrs. Rashid prays five times a day with the two youngsters. Her older children are out at school. "Sometimes, the girls come in and they don't bother to pray, but I always insist — that's the most parents can do. I don't ask them to pray, I remind them very assertively. My daughter who is at the non-Muslim school told me once they have a room where they can go and pray, but I don't know how much use she makes of it."

Mrs. Rashid hopes her children are holding on to Islamic precepts, but she can't be sure. She feels bad when she has to tell her 17-year-old daughter she can't go to a party at a house where Mrs. Rashid doesn't know the parents. "If there was a boy round here whose family we knew, and the children admired each other, then we could let them be friends, without a sexual relationship — but as far as I know, my daughter doesn't have a boyfriend." Then she confides half-sheepishly that she does wonder about a birthday card her teenage son recently received — the name was crossed out.

It is the feeling that her loved ones are losing their way that propels Adeela Rashid into the public eye: "The schools don't teach African history or culture. Our children who are growing up in these English schools, who are being taught to be so liberal and broadminded have no access to their culture. If you have so culture, and you don't know where you came from, then you're just like a blade of grass in the wind; anybody can tell you anything." — The Independent

Powerful Hill and Knowlton has finger in every Washington pie

By Marcy Gordon
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Kuwait, overrun by Iraqi troops, desperately wanted U.S. military intervention. China sought congressional support for favourable trade status after the bloodshed at Tiananmen Square.

Where did they turn for help? To Hill and Knowlton, a powerhouse public relations firm with strong political connections and a sometimes-controversial list of clients.

Some critics charge that Hill and Knowlton, which is owned by a British conglomerate and calls itself the largest public relations firm in the world, helps shape U.S. foreign policy.

"I don't know of a firm that has more clout and more connections. It's really extraordinary," said Charles Lewis, executive director of the Centre for Public Integrity, an ethics research group.

"I think we do make a difference," Bob Witeck, a senior vice president in Washington, said in a telephone interview. But he bristled at suggestions that the firm has acted as a foreign policy player or agent of the Bush administration.

Hill and Knowlton's clients have included: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Haiti, Angola, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which recently pleaded guilty to federal racketeering charges, convicted Saudi financier Adnan Khashoggi, and Maxwell Communications PLC, owned by the late Robert Maxwell. Hill and Knowlton also represents, at no charge, a number of charities and foundations, such as the Alliance for a Drug Free America.

Last August, shortly after the Iraqi invasion, the firm signed a contract with a group funded by the Kuwaiti government-in-exile. The Kuwaitis paid Hill and Knowlton more than \$10 million — a huge sum even by Washington lobbying standards — to mobilise congressional and public support for U.S. military action against Iraq.

Its mission also was to "build support behind" President Bush for U.S. intervention, former Hill and Knowlton Chief Executive Robert Dilenschneider has said. The media blitz included dozens of "video news releases" of alleged Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait that were sent to television stations around the world.

In October 1990, Hill and Knowlton arranged for a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl to tell a televised session of the congressional Human Rights Caucus that she saw Iraqi soldiers remove babies from hospital incubators and leave

them "to die on the cold floor."

The tearful girl, identified at the time only as Nayirah, was recently discovered to be the daughter of Kuwait's ambassador to the United States.

The incubator story was repeatedly cited by Mr. Bush and helped galvanize U.S. support for sending 500,000 troops to the Persian Gulf.

There is ample evidence of other Iraqi atrocities during the period: summary executions of civilians, torture of resistance members and the rape of Kuwaiti and foreign women.

But investigations by human rights groups and news organisations raised questions about whether the incubator claim was only war propaganda.

James A. Hayes, an opposition Democrat in the House of Representatives, said he plans to introduce legislation prohibiting foreign countries from lobbying for war.

Mr. Lewis, of the Centre for Public Integrity, said Hill and Knowlton's political clout and access to policy-makers is enhanced by its "bipartisan flavour."

Top executives of the firm include Robert K. Gray, director of communications for the 1980 Reagan-Bush Republican campaign, Frank Mankiewicz, press secretary to the late Sen. Robert Kennedy and director of George McGovern's presidential campaign, both Democrats, and Anne Wexler, an adviser to former Democratic President Carter.

"Hill and Knowlton has daily contacts at the highest echelons in the White House which will help us guide... an overall image campaign for" China, the firm wrote in a project proposal to the Chinese government last June.

China hired Hill and Knowlton to lobby Congress for the unconditional renewal of most-favoured-nation trade status for

China. Some lawmakers wanted to require China to improve its human rights policies and curtail its foreign arms sales.

Both the House and Senate

passed bills with those conditions. But the legislation fell far short of the 67 votes needed in the Senate to override a promised Bush veto. Congress has never sent it to the White House.

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2) Economist	17 (during February - April)
3) Hydrologist	15 (during February - April)
4) Public Administration Specialist	26 (during February - April)
5) Agriculturalist	22 (during February - April)

Phase II	PERSON-DAYS (APPROXIMATE)
1) Hydrologist	18 (during May - June)
2) Water/Wastewater	18 (during May - June)
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Moscow cake firm cuts output to boost demand

MOSCOW (R) — Cakes have reappeared in Moscow shops after many months' absence, but high prices have driven away all but the most determined customers with a sweet tooth.

And at least one confectioner apparently has no plans to apply the laws of simple economics and intends to cut production rather than lowering prices to stimulate demand.

"Cutting prices may be the only reasonable way out of the situation in the United States, but not in this country at this moment," Galina Kaplunova, an official at the Bolshevik Confectionery, told Reuters.

Ms. Kaplunova said her firm was halving cake output because fivefold price increases had put pastry beyond the reach of most consumers. Lower prices, she said, would only cut profits and wages and make it harder to keep staff.

ASEAN leaders push for free trade zone

SINGAPORE (AP) — Warning that the world might split into rival economic blocs, leaders of the six Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Monday called for the creation of their own free trade zone.

The presidents, prime ministers and a sultan from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand have endorsed the phasing in over 15 years of an ASEAN Free Trade Area, known as AFTA.

"As the world breaks up into economic blocs, we must ponder deeply on what ASEAN should do to respond to what is perceived to be an emerging new world order," said Philippine President Corason Aquino.

She said this was necessary "to ensure against a world which, while renouncing war as an instrument of policy, adopts economic exclusion and attrition as a new strategy of national defence."

Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said that if the Uruguay Round of international trade talks fails, the United States and the European may "seek greater economic security, even if they do not call it protectionism or managed trade."

"Just as the Americans and the Europeans are expanding their economic links with neighbouring countries, so we in ASEAN should expand our economic links with other countries in South East Asia," Mr. Goh said.

in reference to Burma and the three countries of Indochina.

Mrs. Aquino said that "whereas Europe will revolve around itself, ASEAN can be the hub of a network of trade and political relations ... and the region of which we are the heart will be fuelled by two powerful economic engines in Japan and the United States."

In his speech to the opening of the two-day ASEAN summit, Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun acknowledged years of missed opportunities.

For much of its early existence, ASEAN was preoccupied with the fighting in Vietnam and Hanoi's occupation of Cambodia while doing little to encourage economic integration — the premise behind its foundation in 1967.

Mr. Anand, who is credited with reviving earlier proposals for a free trade zone, said past attempts at intra-ASEAN cooperation accomplished little.

"This is because in most cases they were too complicated and cumbersome for both the government and the private sector to implement. Of more importance was the apparent lack of direction," he said.

Agreement on a common effective preferential tariffs system will mean lower tariffs on manufactured goods, processed agricultural products and capital goods to a maximum of five per cent within 15 years.

ASEAN economic ministers agreed last week to accelerate tariff cuts for 15 specific items, among them pharmaceuticals, rubber products and vegetable oil.

Some fault the agreement for excluding basic farm products and the growing services sector, and offering too many loopholes for non-compliance.

Critics say the implementation period is too long, with the potential for amendments that could turn the plan into a patchwork of formulas and exceptions that reduces tariffs on some products but excludes many others.

Indonesia's President Suharto said the ASEAN concept of South East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, known as ZOPFAN, "remains of central validity and relevance."

"The treaty of amity and cooperation has provided a basis for harmonious relations among ASEAN and other countries in the region. This treaty would serve as the first stage towards the realisation of ZOPFAN," he pointed out.

Other countries were welcome to accede to the treaty, Mr. Suharto said.

Vietnam and Laos have been invited to sign the treaty which binds signatories to the principles of peaceful coexistence, the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as mutual respect and non-interference.

Volvo and Procordia plan huge merger

STOCKHOLM (R) — Swedish vehicle maker Volvo and food and drugs firm Procordia have announced plans to merge into one of Europe's biggest concerns, with 105,000 employees.

The merger would combine Procordia's cash-generating food and drug operations with Volvo's cars and trucks, strong trademark and international contacts, their boards said in a statement approving the move.

"A unit is being created that is well on the level of Europe's largest enterprises, and which can accordingly participate actively in the restructuring process and further strengthen Sweden's presence in Europe," the statement said.

The new concern would have an annual turnover of \$20 billion. The merger would be engineered by Procordia offering Volvo shareholders nine shares for four in Volvo in a bid worth 38.7 billion crowns (\$6.6 billion).

The statement said Volvo would be the name of the new company and that the boards would propose Volvo chairman Pehr Gyllenhammar as chairman and Procordia managing director Soren Gyll as chief executive of the new group.

Volvo, whose car-making business has been hit by weak markets, made a 1991 nine-month profit on all of its business operations of 1.28 billion crowns (\$217 million), but a loss on its core activities, mainly vehicles, of 1.26 billion crowns (\$213 million).

Procordia, whose food and drug operations are less sensitive to economic cycles, reported a 23 per cent rise in nine-month net profits to 3.08 billion crowns (\$522 million).

Volvo already has a 39.5 per cent capital share and 42.7 per cent of the votes in Procordia. The Swedish state has 34.2 per cent of the capital and 42.7 per cent of Procordia votes. Procordia currently owns no shares in Volvo.

Swedish news agency TT said although the Swedish government had not decided whether to approve the deal or not, the merger could be carried through even against its wishes if approved by a majority at Procordia's annual general meeting.

"We work according to the bourse rules. It is impossible to let the whole deal depend on discussions with one shareholder even if it happens to be the state," Mr. Gyllenhammar told TT.

World diamond sales decline

LONDON (R) — Sales of rough diamonds fell six per cent in 1991 as most of the major markets were stuck in economic depression, the Central Selling Organisation (CSO), which dominates the world trade, has said.

The CSO, the sales and marketing arm of South Africa's De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, said rough diamond sales totalled \$3.93 billion, down from previous year's \$4.17 billion.

"This represents a significant achievement in the light of the depressed state of the main diamond-consuming markets," the CSO said.

It said figures for world detail sales of diamond jewellery last

year were not yet available but early indications were that sales in the key Christmas period were slightly lower than in 1990.

An anticipated pick-up in demand following the ending of the Gulf war failed to materialise and a temporary foreign exchange shortage in India hampered trade.

"Stocks are not overly high in the major consumer markets which means that once a better consumer environment takes shape, increased demand for rough (diamonds) should follow," it said.

As well as selling diamonds from South Africa, the CSO markets rough diamonds from the

Bankers air reservations over common understanding of world's large banks

By Samir Shafiq

Special to the Jordan Times

Monday's session was opened by an address from Ahmad Abdul Fattah, a senior Central Bank of Jordan official. A summary of the two-hour long lecture on banking merger will be published Wednesday.

AMMAN — The resolutions taken by a Basle committee in 1990 came under heavy criticism from top bankers attending a seminar on banking merger at the Philadelphia Hotel.

The resolution laid down standards and financial criteria to measure the strength of banks and setting up a country-risk table of world nations to enable international banks weigh their global dealings.

"They (resolutions) aren't the Koran or the Bible to be dictated on us. Even if Arab banks achieve the target strength required, the Western world will never provide them the treatment, benefits, advantages and the prestige they are entitled to by then," said Mousa Shehadeh, the general manager of the Islamic Bank in Jordan, denouncing the Basle international banking guidelines which take effect later this year.

Mr. Shehadeh said he was irked by a comment that described Arab banks as weak and that he wanted to stress that "Arab banks were highly qualified for the society they serve."

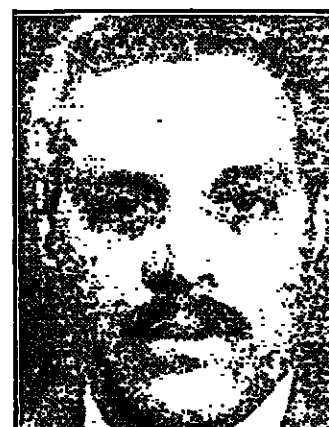
Ahmad Abdul Fattah, a senior Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) official, and Ismail Hasan Mohammedi, the president of the Bank of Alexandria, clarified the points brought up by Mr. Shehadeh and all agreed later that the Basle guidelines were optional and mostly affected Arab banks in Europe pressuring them to increase their "financial sufficiency" to the new required levels or merge or, ultimately, vanish from the scene.

The three bankers saw the merger concept for Arab banks overseas and in the Arab World as good and healthy, but they highlighted the country-risk resolution as improper and unjust. They pointed out that the strength of an Arab bank should be looked at in the context of activity, assets, profitability and size in the country where it operates and should not be compared to, say, a Japanese bank, which does business in an economical, social and cultural environment that does not compare to that of any other country on the globe.

CBJ Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi, who triggered the issue earlier, in the Monday session, explained that the subject of overbanking and a bank's strength should be measured based on the general economic activity of a country and according to the volume of "financial intermediation" which Dr. Nabulsi highly valued as a good indicator because it measures the economic development in a country.

Hani Al Qadi, deputy general manager of the Arab Jordan Investment Bank, added weight to the discussions by saying that there were 14,000 banks in the United States holding a total of \$3.5 trillion in assets. He calculated that each bank was operating an assets portfolio of \$250 million, the same size of an average bank in Jordan.

The participants, debating the issue of banking merger after an address by Mr. Abdul Fattah, repeatedly stressed



Mousa Shehadeh

that figures, data and comparisons with other banks in the world were not really accurate and sometimes misleading. They urged the Arab Banks Union, which is sponsoring the seminar, to start compiling reliable statistics on Arab banks both at home and abroad.

Mr. Mohammedi made a good point when he emphasised that banking merger was a means to achieve a better status and not an end in itself. He elaborated that a merger was a major expansion process and not, as it is thought in the Arab World, a way out of trouble for banks.

The Egyptian banker detailed the Egyptian experience of bank mergers and came to the conclusion that forced or compulsory mergers were harmful.

He specifically gave the example of merging the Bank of Alexandria with the industrial bank years ago and said that due to the varied methods of business focus, the mechanisation system, the flight for the high managerial posts and differing banking background of the employees the merger later failed and the two banks returned to their separate functions.

Dr. Nabulsi elaborated on this point and drew similarities with other cases that took place in Syria, Libya and Yemen in the past, but said he was unable to give details for lack of information on how the mergers in those countries had progressed and what, if any, the level of profitability, financial adequacy and other pertinent statistics were.

Mr. Abdul Fattah said that nowhere in the Arab World had there been a case of a bank merger that could be considered as ideal for evaluation.

He said the case would be to study the performance of two banks over a period of few years in the past up to the point of merger and then a separate study, a few years later, of the performance of the new entity, taking into consideration various external factors as constant or near constant.

The seminar, which was attended by over 60 high ranking bankers in decision-making posts, concluded Monday by issuing a set of recommendations which are summarised as follows:

A) Arab banking reality:
1) After examining the state

of Arab banking, the participants realised that small banking units were operating in a small market in each country separately and that these banks had suffered recently from bad debt problems which hindered their role in sewing the national economy due to the scarcity of funds and inability to provide modern banking services as is the case on the international banking scene.

As such, the participants recommended that banks in Arab countries should consider merging voluntarily while leaving to the monetary authorities in each country the option for compulsory mergers. However, the voluntary mergers should be encouraged with incentives, the statement said.

The statement added that cross-border mergers should be considered when the economic climate and circumstances become suitable in the Arab countries.

2) Expediting the merger of Arab banks operating abroad to face the challenges there and to meet the Basle resolutions regarding the financial adequacy of banks.

B) Banking merger theories:

3) The size in itself is not a sufficient factor to seek merger between banks as it is difficult to envisage the ideal size outside the special elements that characterise a specific market or outside the special strategy of a bank unit in seeking a unique target or a priority such as profitability, expansion, market share or growth.

4) The participants recommended that responsible authorities direct and encourage their merger policies not only to resolve problems of troubled banks, but to formulate new bank units of solid financial structure, capable management and adequate capital base.

5) The troubles of some banks have increased recently and therefore it has become a disturbing phenomenon which affect the credibility and soundness of Arab banks and, as such, it is important to act fast and consider banking merger as a means to overcome the situation. The bankers realised that mergers would not be the magic solution to avoid banking troubles.

C) Legal aspects of bank merger

6) The various Arab legislations lack the necessary legal articles to tackle the merger issue and therefore it was recommended that Arab legislations should be modernised to cover the deficiency regarding mergers either in companies' laws or banking laws.

7) The modernising of legislations should also include incentives for mergers, such as exemption from taxes, and should also allow cross-border mergers.

D) Future outlook of banking merger

8) The bankers also recommended that each Arab country improve the climate within its borders to conduct merger deals to the farthest extent.

At the conclusion of the seminar, Dr. Nabulsi invited the participants to join him for a group photo and, jokingly, urged them "to merge" to fit the photo scope.

Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Thurs 24/1/1992	Tel Aviv Close Thurs 27/1/1992
Sterling Pound	1.7970	1.7869
Deutsche Mark	1.5920	1.6040
Swiss Franc	1.4130	1.4130
French Franc	5.4285	5.4573 **
Japanese Yen	125.25	124.57
European Currency Unit	1.2875	1.2743 **

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Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.13	4.12	4.13	4.50
Sterling Pound	10.62	10.50	10.25	10.18
Deutsche Mark	9.37	9.43	9.31	9.06
Swiss Franc	7.37	7.37	7.31	7.18
French Franc	9.87	9.68	9.62	9.50
Japanese Yen	5.31	5.00	4.75	4.71
European Currency Unit	10.25	10.19	10.12	9.58

Metals	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metals	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	354.85	6.75	Silver	4.17	.093

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6770	0.6790
Sterling Pound	1.2079	1.2139
Deutsche Mark	0.4211	0.4232
Swiss Franc	0.4747	0.4771
French Franc	0.1236	0.1242
Japanese Yen	0.5428	0.5455
Dutch Guilder	0.3741	0.3760
Swedish Krona	0.1158	0.1164
Italian Lira	0.0560	0.0563
Belgian Franc	0.02056	0.02066

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7660	1.7750
Lebanese Lira	0.0765	0.0772
Saudi Riyal	0.1802	0.1815
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1834	0.1845
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7350	1.7410
UAE Dirham	0.1831	0.1845
Greek Drachma	0.3600	0.3670
Cypriot Pound	1.4600	1.5000

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	25/1/1992 Close	26/1/1992 Close
All-Share	133.58	133.91
Banking Sector	110.39	110.55
Insurance Sector	131.35	131.85
Industry Sector	167.65	168.11
Services Sector	150.53	151.50

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Former Soviet republics are dismantling nuclear arsenal

SHANNON, Ireland (Agencies) — The former Soviet republics are exceeding expectations in dismantling their battlefield nuclear weapons, a senior U.S. official said Monday.

The official was travelling with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, whose plane stopped in Shannon, Ireland, to refuel en route to Moscow. Mr. Baker is to attend a two-day Mideast conference designed to ease Arab-Israeli tensions by focusing on common regional problems.

Some of the artillery shells, land mines, air-defence missiles and naval weapons have been gathered and stored within the republics while others are being shipped to Russia to be dismantled, the official said.

"We have some real responses to the concerns that we had," said the official, speaking to reporters aboard Mr. Baker's plane on the condition of anonymity. "They are making more rapid headway than would have been surmised."

He called the overall performance "very good news" but said there has been some lag on destroying the weapons after they are dismantled — a move that ensures the weapons never could be reassembled.

But the delay is caused by a

lack of technology and not a shortage of goodwill, the official said.

As a result, the United States will begin an exchange of technicians shortly, using a \$400 million congressional appropriation, the official said.

American experts will go to Russia and other republics to give instruction in destroying nuclear weapons and the former republics will send technicians to the United States to learn techniques, he said.

But the nuclear topic was also in his mind as he prepared for a meeting this evening with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

There are some 28,000 tactical or short-range nuclear weapons spread among virtually all the 12 former Soviet republics, including about 19,000 along in Russia.

NATO officials have complained the weapons are hard to keep track of. If any fell into the hands of terrorists or rogue regimes the results could be catastrophic.

The concern has risen with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the uncertainty that followed.

Mr. Baker took up the issue with leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia during a visit to the five

former republics last month.

Under-Secretary of State Reginald Bartholomew followed with a delegation drawn from U.S. government offices, including the Defence Department, CIA, National Security Council and the Energy Department.

Last October, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced all nuclear weapons for artillery and land-based tactical weapons would be destroyed. Also, the Soviet leader pledged to withdraw all naval short-range nuclear weapons and said some carried on airplanes would be destroyed.

Overall, about 15,000 weapons were bound for destruction. In November, Congress appropriated \$400 million to assist the Soviets in getting the job done.

The official travelling with Mr. Baker said the former republics would be held to Mr. Gorbachev's pledges and to the various arms control agreements reached with the United States.

In fact, he told reporters: "They actually have moved more rapidly on the question of assembly, storage and dismantling" of the tactical missiles.

The world has seemed to grow little safer in the last few months as the leaders of the United States and what was once the

other superpower lift their fingers off the nuclear trigger.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin stepped back from the nuclear brink Saturday, saying that his country's missiles would no longer target U.S. cities.

His action, coupled with a dramatic White House announcement on arms cuts last September, is the most significant retreat in the costly nuclear arms race since the United States and former Soviet Union began their confrontation after World War II.

The changes represent U.S. and Soviet recognition that they no longer pose a military threat to each other.

Mr. Yeltsin, in an ABC-TV interview in Moscow recorded Saturday, said: "We want to change our military doctrine... no longer consider the United States our potential adversary and turn our intercontinental ballistic missiles away from all cities of the United States."

Interviewer Barbara Walters said Mr. Yeltsin gave no indication of which direction the Russian missiles would be turned and Walters, who was reporting part of Mr. Yeltsin's comments, said the full interview would be shown later this week on ABC's "20/20" programme.

U.N. envoy reports progress in Yugoslav talks

BELGRADE (AP) — A U.N. envoy reported progress Monday in a meeting with a Serb leader opposed to deploying peacekeeping troops in Croatia, while Croats accused the federal army of violating the three-week-old truce.

Croatian defence officials claimed the Serb-dominated army's infantry attacked a village on the outskirts of the Adriatic resort of Dubrovnik.

Croatian radio called the incident the most serious breach of the U.N.-mediated ceasefire since it took effect on Jan. 3, halting a brutal Serb-Croat war that has killed thousands and wreaked widespread destruction.

The United Nations says it wants to be sure the truce will hold before deploying up to 10,000 peacekeeping troops in Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Many inside and outside Yugoslavia fear violence could erupt again in Croatia as well as spread to Bosnia's explosive ethnic mix of Serbs, Croats and Slavic Muslims if peacekeepers do not arrive soon.

U.N. Undersecretary-General Marrack Goulding arrived in Belgrade, the Serbian and federal capital, Sunday to explore prospects for sending peacekeepers.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Gen. Blagoje Adzic, the federal defence minister, reiterated their support for the U.N. peace plan Sunday, the Yugoslav News Agency Tanjug said.

Leaders of two Serb-dominated enclaves in Croatia, Milan Babic and Goran Hadzic, have opposed having peacekeepers in their areas.

But Mr. Goulding said after meeting with Mr. Hadzic in Belgrade Monday that "a step forward has been made," Tanjug reported. Mr. Hadzic, who controls a chunk of eastern Croatia bordering Serbia, declined to elaborate.

Mr. Goulding then left for Knin to meet with Mr. Babic. Croatia declared independence June 25 and, along with Slovenia, won recognition Jan. 15 from the European Community and about two dozen other nations.

Many of the 600,000 Serbs in Croatia do not want their areas to be part of an independent Croatia, claiming they might suffer ethnic persecution.

After meeting with Mr. Milosevic, Mr. Goulding said Serb leaders in Croatia had to be convinced to accept the U.N. plan.

"I think that our understanding is very close," Mr. Goulding said after his talks with Mr. Milosevic, Tanjug reported.

"All of us should do everything in our power" to convince leaders in Serb-held regions of Croatia that the U.N. plan "offers the possibility to establish peace in Yugoslavia. This is in everybody's interest," Mr. Goulding said.

Mr. Goulding was to travel to Zagreb, the Croatian capital, for talks with officials there before returning to New York.

Meanwhile, federal forces turned over 294 Croatian prisoners to the Croats, Croatian radio reported. Most of the prisoners were captured when the town of Vukovar in eastern Croatia fell last November to Serb-led forces after a three-month siege.

Azeris attack village in Armenian enclave, kill 7

MOSCOW (AP) — Armed Azerbaijani soldiers shelled an Armenian village in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, killing seven people and wounding more than 10, the TASS News Agency reported Monday.

The Azerbaijani forces Sunday fired artillery on the small village of Karie-Tak in an attack that reportedly killed some women and children, TASS quoted a spokesman for the republican self-defence headquarters as saying.

Armenian forces counterattacked nearby Azerbaijani villages, according to Russian Television.

One fighter killed in the counter strikes reportedly carried a document identifying him as a French citizen.

French embassy officials in Moscow said Monday they had no information about the man.

The clashes were only the latest flare-up in a three-year battle for control of Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The conflict over the region, located in Azerbaijan but populated mostly by Armenians, has cost more than 800 lives since 1988.

The virtual war between the two rival republics has intensified since Russia's decision in December to withdraw former Soviet military units from the area. The presence of the Soviet units had helped deter fighting.

All efforts to mediate the conflict — including peace missions by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev — have failed.

President Ayaz Muttalibov of Azerbaijan on Jan. 2 imposed direct rule on Nagorno-Karabakh, putting local governments under his control.

But leaders in Nagorno-Karabakh on Jan. 19 formally declared independence from Azerbaijan, and said they wanted the disputed territory to become a new member of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Ramos followers break with major Filipino party

MANILA (AP) — Supporters of presidential aspirant Fidel Ramos broke with the country's largest party and asked the election commission Monday to certify them as a separate organisation in the May election.

Also Monday, Sen. Joseph Estrada, a former actor and mayor, filed his candidacy for president with the commission on elections. Mr. Estrada became the second serious contender to file. President Ferdinand Marcos' widow, Imelda, submitted her papers this month.

A total of 19 aspirants, nine of them serious candidates, have expressed their intention to run in the May 11 election to succeed President Corason Aquino.

On Saturday, Mrs. Aquino announced she would support Gen. Ramos, a former military chief and defence secretary. She endorsed Gen. Ramos over House Speaker Ramon Mitra and Marcelo Fernan, the former Supreme Court chief justice.

Mr. Mitra was nominated by the Struggle of the Democratic Filipino, the largest and best-organised party, which has strongly supported Mrs. Aquino.

Mrs. Aquino's decision to endorse Gen. Ramos, who resigned from the Struggle party last month, split Mrs. Aquino supporters.

Observers believe Gen. Ramos must lure away professional politicians from Mr. Mitra's party. Support of governors, congressmen, mayors and regional political bosses has traditionally been the key to victory in Philippine politics.

Mr. Estrada filed his certificate of candidacy as standard bearer of the Party of the Philippine Masses, which he founded last year to promote his candidacy.

Mr. Estrada served as mayor of suburban San Juan before his election to the Senate in 1987. Before entering politics, he was a prominent movie star and was popular among poor Filipinos.

Rumours should not disqualify presidential campaign — Clinton

PORTSMOUTH, New Hampshire (AP) — Bill Clinton said in a television interview Sunday that it has been difficult to sustain a marriage in the public eye, but that rumours of infidelity should not disqualify his run for the presidency.

The candidate for the Democratic nomination for president this year had been surging in popularity polls until recent rumours of marital infidelity. His wife, Hillary, appeared in the interview alongside the Arkansas governor.

"We're not going to stand up and pretend we're something we're not," Mrs. Clinton said in an interview on the CBS Broadcasting Network. "We're proud of our marriage, we've kept it going, and we hope that's what we can convey to the American people."

The interview was well timed after the Super Bowl football championship, which had an estimated audience of 70 million viewers. The issue of marital infidelity can be a crucial one in American politics; some candidates in the past have withdrawn from races over the issue.

Three weeks from the critical New Hampshire primary, Mr. Clinton sought to put to rest any lingering questions about

whether he had been faithful to his wife of 16 years — and whether such private family matters are relevant to American voters. The New Hampshire vote is a crucial test of candidate strength in the election year.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Clinton said his message to voters was, "we're putting this in your hands — you get to decide."

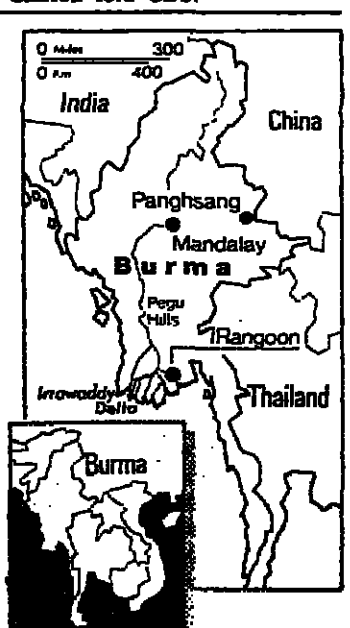
Mr. Clinton said he felt the Sunday interviews should put an end to the issues raised in headlines of the supermarket tabloid, the Star. Although tabloids like the Star enjoy high circulation, they are not considered the most credible publications.

"It is for me, I'm done," Mr. Clinton said upon arrival back home in Little Rock.

His effort to deal with the tabloid stories centred around the CBS interview. He denied, again, the allegations of Gennifer Flowers, a Little Rock woman, who claimed she had a 12-year affair with the governor.

At the same time, Mr. Clinton refused to answer repeated questions about whether he had ever been unfaithful.

"I have acknowledged wrongdoing. I have acknowledged causing pain in my marriage," Mr. Clinton told CBS.



commissioner of the Bangladesh border district, Cox's Bazar, said the refugees would not be granted permanent asylum in his poor country.

The refugees have built huts, mostly by weaving reed stalks and split bamboo into flimsy screens. They subsist on food provided by local people or bought with money earned by doing chores or selling wood. A few Bangladesh volunteer groups distribute food.

British military may help in hospital bed shortage

LONDON (R) — The British government may use beds in military hospitals in an effort to cut waiting lists for surgery in the state's free National Health Service, a spokesman said Sunday.

The government has set an April 1 deadline for ensuring that no body is left waiting more than two years for an operation. Ahead of an election this year, the tax-cutting Conservative government has been accused by the Labour Party opposition of not spending enough on health care.

Yachtsman rescued after 28 days on life raft

TOKYO (AP) — A nearly month-long ordeal on a life raft has ended for a Japanese yachtsman after he was rescued by a passing cargo ship, officials said. Miharu Sano, 31, was plucked from the ocean about 230 kilometres south of Chichijima Island after spending 28 days in a life raft, Maritime Safety Agency officials said.

Mr. Sano had drifted some 500 kilometres south of where the boat capsized. He told marine police the boat had been swamped by a huge wave. Mr. Sano was extremely exhausted and had suffered several scratch wounds but could walk with some assistance. He was hospitalised in stable condition. He had seen a rescue plane fly overhead twice, but it apparently failed to notice him, agency officials said.

He managed to attract the attention of crewmembers of the Maersk Cypress, a British cargo vessel, by waving his life jacket over his head.

Fire guts building housing valuable musical collection

BURBANK, California (AP) — Original scores by Mozart and Beethoven were destroyed when fire swept through a building housing a multimillion-dollar music and art collection, officials said. The three-alarm blaze was reported late Friday and burned for two hours. Fire Chief Richard Fischer said. The fire collapsed the roof of the commercial building. No injuries were reported.

The building was home to the Deutsch and Rigler Foundation, which owned the antiquities, and a venture capital business called Leder Corp., Mr. Fischer said. Besides compositions by Ludwig Van Beethoven and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the collection also contained a letter written by Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini. Fire officials estimated damage at \$3 million to the building and \$4.5 million to its contents.

Filipina Lady Moynihan ready for London snub

MANILA (R) — The Filipina widow of runaway British playboy Lord Anthony Moynihan said Sunday she is determined to see her one-year-old son Daniel grow up to be a "proper Englishman" and speak in the House of Lords. Janna Sabiaga, fifth and last wife of the late British peer and bon vivant, told Reuters that in order to fulfil her ambition she was willing to endure any snub she might receive from British aristocrats. "The dream of my son speaking in the House of Lords," said the 26-year-old former hotel receptionist who graduated with a degree in business administration from a Manila university. "He cannot grow up here and then just take his seat in the House of Lords. He must learn the culture, the traditions of Britain. We have to educate Daniel... to become a proper Englishman," she said. The trustee of Lord Moynihan's estate said Wednesday that Daniel, the son of the late peer who died age 55 last November, in Manila, has been recognised as a British baron with the right to a seat in the House of Lords. Ms. Sabiaga concedes the close-knit world of British aristocrats may ignore her as a provincial, unsophisticated Filipina who acquired her current title by a fortuitous marriage.

"There are problems, but I have to be strong. I have to be tough for Daniel's sake," Mr. Sabiaga said. "But I am not worried. The people there are very supportive. I think they (the trustees of the estate) are quite proud since they acknowledged my son as the fourth Baron Moynihan," she added.

Actor Jose Ferrer dies at 80

MIAMI (AP) — Jose Ferrer, the renowned stage and screen actor who won an Academy Award in 1950 for his role as Cyrano de Bergerac, died Sunday after a short illness. He was 80.

Ferrer, who made his reputation as a classical actor with his 1946 Broadway triumph in the title role of Cyrano, died at Doctors' Hospital in suburban Coral Gables, said his fourth wife, Stella.

The cause of death was not disclosed. "I shared the most important part of my life with him and I will miss him very much," Rosemary Clooney, Ferrer's third wife, said Sunday. She was married to him from 1953-1967.

During a theatre career that spanned more than 50 years, Ferrer won two Tony Awards for acting — in Cyrano de Bergerac in 1947, and The Shrike in 1952 — and a Tony Award for his direction of The Fourposter, Stag 17 and The Shrike, all done in the 1951-52 Broadway season.

Ferrer made his Broadway debut in 1935, and had his first major role in a revival of Charles' Aunt shortly thereafter.

He appeared as Iago opposite Paul Robeson's Othello in 1943, with his then-wife Uta Hagen as Desdemona. His other Broadway credits include revivals of The Silver Whistle and Twentieth Century, as well as the Noel Coward musical The Girl Who Came to Supper.

In the 1951-52 season, he directed Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy in the two-character comedy The Fourposter and produced and directed Stag 17, a play set in a World War II prison camp. He also produced, directed and starred as Jim Down in the Pulitzer Prize-winning The Shrike.

Ferrer played the dauphin to Ingrid Bergman's Joan of Arc in the 1948 film, and received his first Oscar nomination. In addition to his Academy Award-winning performance in Cyrano de Bergerac, he was nominated for a third Oscar for his portrayal of Toulouse Lautrec in Moulin Rouge.

His other screen appearances included Miss Sadie Thompson, The Caine Mutiny, Deep in My Heart, The Cockleshell Heroes, I Accuse, The Shrike, Nine Hours to Rama, Lawrence of Arabia, The Greatest Story Ever Told, Ship Of Fools, Enter Laughing, Dune and A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy.

Ferrer's last stage appearance was in 1990 in a musical version of Ionesco's Rhinoceros, which he did in England with Mandy Patinkin. The actor was to have appeared on Broadway in March, co-starring with Judd Hirsch in Herb Gardner's new play, Conversations With My Father. He withdrew from the production last month.

In 1985, Ferrer received the National Medal of the Arts from President Ronald Reagan. Until recently, he was president of the players club.

On television, Ferrer starred in two productions of Cyrano de Bergerac, the pilot for the crime series Kojak and many original dramas. Most recently, he appeared in the comedy series Newhart.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan opens ties with 5 republics

TOKYO (AP) — Japan has opened diplomatic ties with Ukraine and four other former Soviet republics, Foreign Ministry officials said Monday. Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, now in Moscow, exchanged diplomatic papers Sunday with representatives from Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan establishing relations effective immediately, they said. Japan had recognised the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in December and transferred its relations with the former Soviet Union to Russia. The officials said Japan will continue to establish relations with the other former republics but will remain cautious about recognising and setting up ties with Georgia, which is still entangled in an internal conflict.

Baltics call for quick troop pullout

MOSCOW (R) — Parliamentarians from the three Baltic states called on Russian President Boris Yeltsin Sunday to withdraw all former Soviet troops from their territory as soon as possible. The Baltic Assembly, grouping deputies from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, said it hoped negotiations set for Tuesday and Wednesday would fix an early deadline for a complete withdrawal of the troops. The assembly said the pullout of the estimated 400,000 ex-Soviet servicemen in the Baltics should start immediately. TASS News Agency reported from the Latvian capital Riga.

Moscow's troops to leave Poland by Nov. 15

WARSAW (R) — The commander of an estimated 45,000 Soviet troops stationed in Poland confirmed Sunday that all combat units under his command would leave by Nov. 15, the Polish News Agency (PAP) said. But Colonel-General Viktor Dubinin, reiterating terms of a Polish-Soviet agreement reached last year before the Soviet Union was formally dissolved, accused the Polish authorities of trying to block the necessary financial settlement. His forces had received no remuneration for about 700 buildings they would leave behind in Poland, he told a news conference. He urged the Poles settle their debts over the next two or three months. Poland insists that Moscow owes an estimated \$1.6 billion for ecological damage caused by the Soviet forces. Gen. Dubinin's remarks triggered a heated response from General Zdzislaw Ostrowski, the Polish official coordinating the pullout, who said he would not allow "lies to be spread about the Polish government."

Irish commemorate 'bloody Sunday'

LONDONDERY, Northern Ireland (R) — Fourteen children carrying black flags headed a march by thousands of Irish nationalists marking the 20th anniversary of the "bloody Sunday" civil rights protest which ended in violence. The children, representing 13 demonstrators shot dead by British paratroopers and the 14th who died later in hospital, led the march from Londonderry's republican Creggan and Bogside districts to the centre of the picturesque walled city. Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, leader of the Irish Republican Army's political wing, told the protesters that the "bloody Sunday" shooting was not a mistake but was the British government's answer to the reasonable demands for civil rights. "It was premeditated, designed and executed with deadly intent," he said.

Muslim refugees tell of atrocities by Burmese military

MARRISHA PALONG, Bangladesh (AP) — Muslim refugees, fleeing Burma by the tens of thousands, say its military rulers are conducting a systematic terror campaign to drive Muslims out. More than 60,000 Burmese Muslims have found temporary refuge in Bangladesh in the last 10 months. More arrive daily across the border from Arakan state in predominantly Buddhist Burma.

Individual stories cannot be verified because Burma's doors are closed. But the fact that Muslims leave fertile Arakan and virtually all their possessions for a precarious future in one of the world's poorest nations testifies to their plight.

Lalu Abu Hasem said three soldiers entered her house, purged her when she fled, then beat her with a broom and took turns raping her.

Like other women who reported sexual abuse, her husband had been taken away for forced labour, leaving her vulnerable, she said at a makeshift camp for 7,000 refugees in Marrisha Palong.

Anwar Fakir, 8, told how soldiers stopped his father as he

was carrying the boy to the hospital with a fever. They ordered Anwar's father to carry wood, and when he refused they beat the child, ripping a strip of flesh from his right leg with his rifle butt. Father and son escaped to Bangladesh.

An Associated Press reporter watched as three wooden boats crammed with about 250 refugees were rowed across the broad frontier Naaf River at noon one day last week.

Women with crying infants struggled up the muddy banks. husbands rarely carried more than a single sack, all that remained of family possessions that once included land, a house and livestock.

Most of those in the boats were men in their teens and 20s who said they had feared being taken away to dig ditches, build barracks, carry military supplies or act as human shields in combat.

The youngest were two boys, ages 10 and 11, who told of digging ponds for almost a month. They said the soldiers gave them nothing to eat and they survived through the charity of local villagers.

Mohammad Dil, a farmer and

local leader in Arakan, produced a document from the Burmese military ordering 365 families to tear down their homes within 10 days and move from a village where their families had lived for generations.

Mr. Dil said authorities accused the families of building their houses illegally. Evicted villagers watched as Muslim labourers were forced to demolish the village mosque with sledgehammers, he said, and they were given no compensation or alternate place to settle.

"The military told us: 'This is not your land. Your fathers are in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, America — go to them,'" Dil said. He and others believe the Burmese junta is trying to drive Arakan's large Muslim population out through land confiscation and calculated brutality.

Refugees and human rights organisations like Amnesty International also have reported torture and executions by the military government, which has been condemned by the United States, European nations and others.

The current junta seized power in 1988 after the army killed several thousands majority Bur-

man protesters in putting down a pro-democracy uprising.

Treatment of Muslims has been particularly harsh. The official Burmese press bristles with attacks on "mixed-bloods" and foreigners seeking to contaminate the pure Burman race.

Muslims constitute up to 16 per cent of Burma's 42 million people, and are hardly foreigners. In rugged, underdeveloped Arakan, they form a distinct cultural group known as Rohingyas who trace their roots there to the 8th century.

Burmans conquered Arakan in the late 18th century, ending three centuries of independence. Resistance continues in the state to this day among both Muslims and Buddhists, who are known as Rakhines.

Mohammad Zakariya, a Muslim separatist leader, describes the British colonial era of 1826-1948 as a "sign of relief" for Rohingyas from the massacres, expulsions and injustices suffered before and since.

Mr. Zakariya estimates 1 million Rohingyas live in exile, mostly in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India. Poor and remote, they receive little inter-

national attention.

Rohingyas last fled in large numbers in 1978, when more than 200,000 bolted to Bangladesh with similar tales of Burmese atrocities.

Most returned after Bangladesh drew international attention to their plight and suggested Burma could face a holy war supported by the Middle East unless the refugees were properly repatriated.

This time, a solution may prove more difficult.

"We didn't come to stay here, but we want the international community, the United Nations, to insure our rights as human beings" before they return to Burma, said Dil, who was among the 1978 refugees.

The situation is further complicated by military buildups on both sides of the 280-kilometres border since a raid by the Burmese in December. Two Bangladeshi soldiers were killed when their border checkpoint was fired on.

Burma claims it is acting against a dozen minor Rohingya and Rakhine insurgency groups along the frontier.

Daud-Uz-Zaman Chowdhury,

Handwritten signature: Daud-Uz-Zaman Chowdhury